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Biography

# The Great Composers

OR

STORIES OF THE LIVES OF EMINENT MUSICIANS

By C. E. BOURNE

AUTHOR OF 'HEROES OF AFRICAN ADVENTURE,' ETC., ETC.



*Music ought to strike fire from the souls of men.*—BEETHOVEN.

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## PREFACE.

THE personal life of some great men, apart from the books they wrote, the machines they invented, the doctrines they taught, or the discoveries they made, is often hardly worth the telling, and there is even nobility in the self-effacing thought that some have uttered, 'Remember my work, if you will, but let *myself* be forgotten.'

But there are other great men, and all those to whom the name of artists is now applied, belong to this class, whose work, appealing as it does to the emotions, is itself peculiarly the product (if it is their work at all) of the emotional part of the man—he lives and works and rules in the wide field of the spiritual and the ideal, and without exception, the lives of such men, being so closely related to their work that the one can hardly exist or be understood without the other, never fail to be interesting and full of what we call 'romance' interwoven with everything they conceived, achieved, or were foiled in. And especially, it seems to me, is this true of all the great musicians who have lived.

In studying their lives, from Mozart to Mendelssohn, I have found the peculiar sensitiveness to pleasure and pain, the overflowing in all their life—in their words and their work—of their keen delight in living and in the wonderful and beautiful world, which with eyes sometimes even bewildered with the sight of the loveliness that to others perhaps seems but a mere arrangement of colour or odd murmur of confused sounds, they are never tired of gazing on and having a part in—the true sign of the poet, be he a worker in words, tones, or colours! And to show something of this life without pretension or learned disquisition,

or anything else but a sincere desire to enter into sympathy with the great men who have gone from us, but whose works ever remain with us, has been the object of my writing this book.

These are 'stories of their lives,' and of necessity many oft-told anecdotes are repeated here, as they have been repeated in biographies without number before. It is often difficult to trace the origin of a story that is quoted in turn by every biographer with the utmost regularity, and I do not think it would be of any use to myself or to my readers to give a long list of the many works that have been consulted. One exception to this, however, I desire to make in acknowledging my indebtedness (especially in the case of the valuable monograph on 'Mendelssohn') to the *Dictionary of Music*, edited by Dr. George Grove, himself so distinguished an art-critic.

The book might have been very much extended if my limits had allowed, and there are several musicians whom, I confess, it went sorely against the grain to exclude, such as Spohr, Meyerbeer, Donizetti, Bellini, Gounod, Verdi, Liszt, and Wagner. But it was not found possible to include them all, and by confining the list to musicians of the past, and those of the highest rank, the only practical means of compressing my materials into one volume was adopted.

In conclusion, I can only hope—to use a very old-fashioned and well-worn phrase—that the little book now offered to them may give my readers at least as much pleasure as its writing has afforded to myself during the many days that I have been privileged, after a fashion, to live in the society of these great tone-poets of the past.

C. E. B.

THE TEMPLE.





BORN FEBRUARY 23, 1685. DIED APRIL 13, 1759.

# H A N D E L.

*When he chooses he can strike like a thunderbolt.*

MOZART.

*I would uncover my head and kneel at his grave.*

BEETHOVEN.

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL, of whom Haydn once reverently said, 'He is the master of us all,' was born at Halle, in Lower Saxony, on 23d February 1685. His father was a surgeon, and sixty-three years of age at the time of his birth—a terribly severe old man, who almost before his son was born had determined that he should be a lawyer. The little child knew nothing of the fate before him, he only found that he was never allowed to go near a musical instrument much as he wanted to hear its sweet sounds, and the obstinate father even took him away from the public day-school for the simple reason that the musical gamut was taught there in addition to ordinary reading, writing, and arithmetic.

But love always 'finds out the way,' and his mother or nurse managed to procure for him the forbidden delights; a small clavichord, or dumb spinet, with the

strings covered with strips of cloth to deaden the sound, was found for the child, and this he used to keep hidden in the garret, creeping away to play it in the night-time when every one else was asleep, or whenever his father was away from home doctoring his patients.

But at last, when George Frederick was seven years of age, the old man was compelled to change his views. It happened in this way. He set out one day on a visit to the court of the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, where another son by a former marriage was a page. George Frederick had been teasing his father to let him go with him to see his elder brother, whom he had not yet met, but this was refused. When old Handel started by the stage-coach the next morning, the persistent little fellow was on the watch ; he began running after it, and at length the father was constrained to stop the coach and take the boy in. So, though at the expense of a severe scolding, the child had his way, and was allowed to go on to Saxe-Weissenfels. When there the chapel, with the beautiful organ, was the great attraction, and George Frederick, as indomitable then as he was in after life, found his way into the organ loft, and when the regular service was over, contrived to take the organist's place, and began a performance of his own ; and, strange to say, though he had not had the slightest training, a melody with chords and the correct harmonies was heard. The Duke had not left the chapel, and noticing the difference in style from

that of the ordinary organist, inquired as to the player, and when the little boy was brought to him he soon discovered, by the questions he put, the great passion for music which possessed the child. The Duke, a sensible man, told the father it would be wrong to oppose the inclination of a boy who already displayed such extraordinary genius; and old Handel, either convinced, or at any rate submitting to the Duke's advice, promised to procure for his son regular musical instruction. Handel never afterwards forgot the debt of gratitude he owed to the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels for this intercession.

On his return to Halle he became the pupil of Zachau, the organist of the cathedral there. This man was an excellent teacher and a sound musician. Before the pupil was nine years old, his instructor used to set him to write fugues and motets as exercises, and before long the boy was allowed to play the organ at the cathedral services on Sunday, whenever the elder musician was inclined to linger over his breakfast or to take a holiday. At last, when young Handel was only nine years old, the master honestly confessed that his pupil knew more music than he himself did, and advised that he should be sent to Berlin for a course of further study there. Thither he accordingly went in the year 1696.

In Berlin the boy of eleven years was soon recognised as a prodigy. There he met two Italian composers of established reputation, Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti,



both of whom he was to encounter in after life, though under very different circumstances, in London. Bononcini, who was of a sour and jealous disposition, soon conceived a dislike for the gifted little fellow, and attempted to injure him by composing a piece for the harpsichord full of the most extraordinary difficulties, and then asking him to play it at sight. The boy, however, at once executed it without a mistake, and thus the malicious schemer was foiled by his own device. Attilio was of a different disposition; he praised the young musician to the skies, and was never weary of sitting by his side at the organ or harpsichord, and hearing him improvise for hours. The Elector of Brandenburg also conceived a great admiration for the boy's talents, and offered to send him to Italy. On old Handel being consulted, however, he pleaded that he was now an old man, and wished his son to remain near him. In consequence of this, probably much to the boy's disappointment, he was brought back to Halle, and there set to work again under his old master Zachau.

Soon after this return his father died in 1697, leaving hardly anything for his family, and young Handel had now seriously to bestir himself to make a living. With this object he went to Hamburg, where he obtained a place as second violin in the Opera-house. Soon after arriving there, the post of organist at Lübeck became vacant, and Handel was a candidate for it. But a peculiar condition was attached to the acceptance of

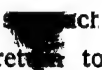
the office ; the new organist must marry the daughter of the old one ! and as Handel either did not approve of the lady, or of matrimony generally (and in fact he never was married), he promptly retired from the competition. At first no one suspected the youth's talents, for he amused himself by pretending to be an ignoramus, until one day the accompanyist on the harpsichord (then the most important instrument in an orchestra) was absent, and young Handel took his place, astonishing everybody by his masterly touch. Probably this discovery aroused the jealousy of some of his brother artists, for soon afterwards a duel took place between him and Mattheson, a clever composer and singer, who one night in the midst of a quarrel, on leaving the theatre, gave him a box on the ear : swords were drawn, and the duel took place there and then under the portico of the theatre. Fortunately Mattheson's weapon was shattered by coming in contact with a metal button on his opponent's coat. Explanations were then offered, and the two adversaries became friends—indeed close friends—afterwards. ' *Almira, Queen of Castile*,' Handel's first opera, was brought out in Hamburg in 1705, and was followed by two others, ' *Nero* ' and ' *Daphne*,' all received with great favour, and frequently performed.

But the young musician determined to visit Italy as soon as possible, and after staying in Hamburg three years, and having, besides the money he sent his mother, saved two hundred ducats for travelling expenses, he

was able to set off on the journey, then one of the great events in a musician's lifetime. He visited Florence, Venice, Rome, and Naples, in almost every city writing operas, which we are told were produced with the most brilliant success. At Venice an opera was sought for from him, and in three weeks he had written 'Agripina.' When produced, the people received it with frantic enthusiasm, the theatre resounding with shouts of '*Viva il caro Sassone!*' (Long live the dear Saxon!) The following story illustrates the extraordinary fame he so quickly acquired in Italy. He arrived at Venice during the middle of the Carnival, and was taken to a masked ball, and there played the harpsichord, still keeping on his mask. Domenico Scarlatti, the most famous harpsichord player of his age, on hearing him, exclaimed, 'Why, it's the devil, or else the Saxon whom every one is talking about!' In 1709 he returned to Hanover, and was appointed by the Elector George of Brunswick, afterwards King George I. of England, his court Capellmeister.

The next year Handel paid a visit to London, and there Aaron Hill, director of the Haymarket Theatre, engaged him to compose the opera of 'Rinaldo,' which was written in a fortnight, and was marvellously successful. Some *morceaux* from it, such as the lovely 'Lascia ch'io pianga,' 'Cara sposa,' and the March, are still performed. This opera was put on the stage with a magnificence then, and even now, unusual; and a flight of real birds in the scene of the gardens of

Armida is given as an example of the clever devices of stage management, though the *Spectator*, in referring to it, probably jocosely, hints that the birds, by knocking over the candles, and flying all over the place, were little else than a nuisance. Welsh, the musical publisher, made £1500 by publishing the airs of the opera, and Handel, who possessed a considerable vein of dry humour, remarked on this, 'My dear sir, as it is only right that we should be upon an equal footing, *you* shall compose the next opera, and *I* will sell it!' After returning for a short time to Hanover, we find him in England again in 1713, when the grand 'Te Deum' and 'Jubilate' composed by him on the occasion of the peace of Utrecht, were performed in St. Paul's Cathedral before Queen Anne and the Houses of Parliament, and the queen was so enraptured with these compositions, that she bestowed upon the composer the substantial reward of a pension of £200 a year for life.

It is not very surprising that, treated with  honour, Handel was in no great hurry to return to Hanover, and in fact he remained in England and coolly ignored his engagement across the sea. But an awkward piece of retribution was at hand. The Elector of Hanover, on the death of Queen Anne, came to England as the new king, and Handel, his delinquent Capellmeister, could hardly expect to receive any share of the royal favour in future. With the help of a friend of his, Baron Kilmanseck, he determined, however, to make an attempt to conciliate

the king, and accordingly he wrote twenty-five short concerted pieces of music, and made arrangements for these to be performed by musicians in a boat following the royal barge on the Thames one day when the king went on an excursion up the river for a pic-nic. The king recognised the composer at once by his style, and spoke in terms of approbation of the music, and the news was quickly conveyed by his friend to the anxious musician. This is the story of the origin of the famous 'Water Music.' Soon afterwards the king allowed Handel to appear before him to play the harpsichord accompaniments to some sonatas executed by Geminiani, a celebrated Italian violinist, and finally peace was made between them, Handel being appointed music-master to the royal children, and receiving an additional pension of £200. In 1726 a private Act of Parliament was passed making George Frederick Handel a naturalised Englishman.

Handel was for some years director of the music at Cannons, the magnificent residence of the Duke of Chandos, which is said to have cost £230,000, and here he composed the Chandos Anthems, and also the more celebrated 'Harmonious Blacksmith.' The last piece is one of 'Suites de pièces pour le Clavecin,' which Handel composed; and the story connected with it, though doubted by some, is about as well established as most musical anecdotes are—at any rate *se non e vero e ben trovato*. One day Handel was overtaken by a shower while passing on foot through the

village of Edgware, and he was compelled to take refuge in the house of one Powell a blacksmith, who was also the parish clerk. Under shelter in the smithy he watched Powell, who, after greeting him, had resumed his work. As he laboured at the anvil, the blacksmith sang an old song, while the sturdy strokes of his hammer resounded on his anvil in regular cadence with the notes, and Handel's trained ear was quick to perceive that by a curious coincidence the sounds that came from the anvil were in the same key as those of the song, and formed a sort of continuous bass to it. The shower cleared up, he went on his way, but the song with its accompaniment persistently lingered in his memory, and the same evening he sat down to the harpsichord and composed the piece of music to which, from its connection with this incident, the title of 'The Harmonious Blacksmith' has been given.

In the year 1720 a number of noblemen formed themselves into a company for the purpose of reviving Italian opera in this country at the Haymarket Theatre, and subscribed a capital of £50,000. The king himself subscribed £1000, and allowed the society to take the name of the Royal Academy of Music, and at first everything seemed to promise the most brilliant success. Handel was appointed director of the music. Bononcini and Attilio Ariosto, his old acquaintances in Berlin, were also attracted by this new operatic venture to London, and their arrival was followed by a competition of a very novel character. The libretto of a new opera,

'Muzio Scævola' was divided between the three composers. Attilio was to put the first act to music, Bononcini the second, and Handel the third. We need hardly wonder that the victory is said to have rested with the last and youngest of the trio, although at this time the cabals against him, which afterwards were to do him such grievous harm, had already commenced. In connection with this rivalry a clever epigram is always quoted, often as Swift's, though it really was by Byrom, the Lancashire poet—

*Some say, compared to Bononcini,  
That Mynheer Handel's but a Ninny;  
Others aver that he to Handel  
Is scarcely fit to hold a Candle:  
Strange all this difference should be  
'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee.*

Of the many operas written for the Royal Academy of Music it is needless to speak, for all but in name have long been forgotten. <sup>As</sup> might have been expected, the noblemen's enterprise did not succeed, and in eight years they had spent the whole of their £50,000, and then had to close the theatre. A reaction in public taste had taken place, and crowds were flocking nightly to Rich's theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields to see the droll, though not particularly moral 'Beggar's Opera' of Gay's, the music of which was principally compounded of old English ballads, while the correct and dully insipid performances in the Haymarket were almost deserted. But Handel was not dismayed: he had saved £10,000, and on the collapse of the noblemen's

company he took the theatre himself. Little good came to him from this, for, what with the big salaries he had to pay the Italian singers and the coldness with which one after another of his new operas was received, the speculation proved a terribly losing one to him. But the good that is said to come out of evil is perhaps to be seen here, for if he had not at last lost confidence in his labours of tricking out Italian insipidities in music immeasurably too good for them, he might not have so soon discovered where his real strength—as a composer of *sacred* music—lay. The year 1732 was memorable for the performance at the Haymarket Theatre of his first great English oratorio ‘*Esther*,’ and this, having proved a great success, was followed at no long intervals by the beautiful cantata ‘*Acis and Galatea*,’ and the fine oratorio ‘*Deborah*.’

Handel still clung to his operatic speculation ; and when he had to leave the Haymarket Theatre, which was given up to another Italian Company with the famous Farinelli from Lincoln’s Inn Fields, undauntedly he changed to the Lincoln’s Inn Fields Theatre, and there commenced again. More operas were produced with the one unvarying tale of *fiasco*, and at last, in 1737, having lost the whole of his hardy earned money, Handel was compelled to close the theatre, and, worse than all, to suspend payment for a time. Happily he now again turned his thoughts to oratorio. ‘*Saul*’ and ‘*Israel in Egypt*’ were composed in quick succession ; the last gigantic work being written in the almost incredibly



short space of twenty-seven days. How great it is every one now knows, but, at the time, the colossal choruses were actually considered a great deal too heavy and monotonous; and Handel, always quick in resource, at the second performance introduced a number of operatic songs to make them go down better, and after the third performance, the piece was withdrawn altogether. Fortunately opinions have changed since then. These works were followed by his fine setting of Dryden's 'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day,' and Milton's 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' but it cannot be said that his pecuniary affairs were materially improved by their production.

A journey to Ireland, which was made in the year 1741, will always be remembered in connection with his immortal work the 'Messiah,' which was first performed for the benefit of charitable institutions in Dublin in the following spring. Of this journey, Dr. Burney tells a very droll story of an incident that occurred at Chester on the way. He says:—

'I was at the public school in that city, and very well remember seeing him smoke a pipe over a cup of coffee at the Exchange Coffee House; for, being extremely curious to see so extraordinary a man, I watched him narrowly as long as he remained in Chester, which, on account of the wind being unfavourable for his embarking at Parkgate, was several days. During this time he applied to Mr. Baker the organist, my first music-master, to know whether there were any choirmen in the Cathedral who could sing at sight, as he wished to prove some books that had been hastily transcribed, by trying the choruses which he intended to perform in Ireland. Mr. Baker mentioned some of

the most likely singers, amongst others, a house-painter named Janson. A time was fixed for this private rehearsal at the Golden Falcon, where Handel was quartered ; but, alas ! on trial of the chorus in the " Messiah," " And with His stripes we are healed," poor Janson, after repeated attempts, failed so egregiously, that Handel, after swearing in four or five different languages, cried out in broken English, " You schountrel, tit not you dell me you could scing at sight ? " " Yes, sir," said the painter, " but not at *first* sight ! " "

The first performance of the ' Messiah ' took place at Neale's Music Hall, in Dublin, on 18th April 1742, at mid-day, and, *à propos* of the absurdities of fashion, it may be noticed that the announcements contained the following request :—' That ladies who honour this performance with their presence, will be pleased to come *without hoops*, as it will greatly increase the charity by making room for more company.' The work was gloriously successful, and £400 were obtained the first day for the Dublin charities. Handel seems always to have had a special feeling with regard to this masterpiece of his—as if it were too sacred to be merely used for making money by, like his other works. He very frequently assisted at its performance for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital, and he left the score as a precious gift to the governor of that institution. This work alone brought no less a sum than £10,299 to the funds of the Hospital. In this connection a fine saying of his may be repeated. Lord Kinnoul had complimented him on the noble ' entertainment ' which by the ' Messiah ' he had lately given the town. ' My lord,' said Handel, ' I should be sorry

if I only entertained them—*I wish to make them better.* And when some one questioned him on his feelings when composing the Hallelujah Chorus, he replied in his peculiar English, ‘I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself.’ What a fine saying that was of poor old George III., in describing the ‘pastoral symphony’ in this oratorio,—‘I could see the stars shining through it!’

The now constant custom of the audience to rise and remain standing during the performance of this chorus, is said to have originated in the following manner. On the first production of the work in London, ‘the audience were exceedingly struck and affected by the music in general; but when that chorus struck up, “For the Lord God Omnipotent” in the “Hallelujah,” they were so transported that they all together, with the king (who happened to be present), started up and remained standing till the chorus ended. This anecdote I had from Lord Kinnoul.’ So says Dr. Beattie, the once famous poet, in one of his letters.

The ‘Messiah’ was commenced on 22d August 1741, finished on September 12, and the orchestration filled up two days afterwards—the whole work thus being completed in twenty-three days. Handel was fifty-six years old at the time.

The next ten years of the life of the ‘Goliath of Music,’ as he has been called, are marked by some of the most splendid achievements of his genius. ‘Samson,’ the

'Dettingen Te Deum,' 'Joseph,' 'Belshazzar,' 'The Occasional Oratorio,' 'Judas Maccabeus,' 'Joshua,' 'Solomon,' and 'Theodora,' being composed by him during this time, when, already an old man, it might have been thought that he would have taken some repose after the labours of so toilsome and troubled a life. But, oaklike, he was one of those who mature late ; like Milton, his greatest works were those of his old age. Judas Maccabeus was perhaps the most successful at the time ; it was written in thirty-two days, and had been commissioned by Frederick, Prince of Wales, to celebrate the victory of his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, at Culloden, over the Pretender and his forces. The words were compiled by a poetaster named Morell, who thus dedicates the work to the conqueror :—' To His Royal Highness Prince William, Duke of Cumberland, this faint portraiture of a truly wise, valiant, and virtuous commander, as to the possessor of the like noble qualities, is with most profound respect and veneration inscribed,' etc. etc. This Duke of Cumberland was in reality a very coarse and unherolike leader, and had sullied his victory with most brutal and cold-blooded butchery of prisoners taken in war ; but Handel probably thought very little of the one whose name was to be inscribed on the work, when he wrote the sublime music celebrating the deeds of the great Jewish liberator. The 'Messiah,' 'Israel in Egypt,' 'Samson,' and 'Judas,' may be said to be his grandest works.

But a terrible misfortune was approaching—his eyesight was failing. The ‘drop serene,’ of which Milton speaks so pathetically, had fallen on his eyes, and at the time when, in February 1752, he was composing his last work, ‘Jephtha’ (the one containing ‘Deeper and Deeper Still,’ and ‘Waft her, Angels,’ which Mr. Sims Reeves’s singing has made so familiar to us), the effort in tracing the lines is, in the original MS., very painfully apparent. Soon afterwards he submitted to three operations, but they were in vain, and henceforth all was to be dark to him. His sole remaining work was now to improvise on the organ, and to play at performances of his oratorios. There is a pathetic story told of an incident that occurred on one occasion when ‘Samson’ was given. While the magnificent air—

*Total eclipse! no sun, no moon!  
All dark amidst the blaze of noon.  
O glorious light! no cheering ray  
To glad my eyes with welcome day.  
Why thus deprived thy prime decree?  
Sun, moon, and stars are dark to me—*

was being sung by Beard the tenor, the blind old man, seated at the organ, was seen to tremble and grow pale, and then when he was led forward to the audience to receive their applause, tears were in the eyes of nearly every one present at the sight. It was like the scene that is described in Beethoven’s life on the occasion of that composer’s appearance, when almost totally deaf, to conduct his great Choral Symphony at Vienna.

One night on returning home from a performance of the 'Messiah' at Covent Garden, Handel was seized with sudden weakness and retired hurriedly to bed, from which he was never to rise again. He prayed that he might breathe his last on Good-Friday, 'in hope of meeting his good God, his sweet Lord and Saviour on the day of his resurrection.' And strangely enough his wish was granted, for on Good Friday, April 13th, 1759, he quietly passed away from this life, being then seventy-four years of age. His remains were laid in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, and the place is marked by a statue by Roubilliac, representing him leaning over a table covered with musical instruments, his hand holding a pen, and before him is laid the 'Messiah,' open at the words, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

Handel is described as being of large and portly figure, with a countenance full of fire and dignity, eyes remarkably bright, short and prominent eyebrows and finely marked and handsome features. Burney says of him, 'Handel's general look was somewhat heavy and sour, but when he did smile it was like his sire the sun bursting out of a black cloud. There was a sudden flash of intelligence, wit, and good humour beaming in his countenance which I hardly ever saw in any other.' He was a tremendously passionate man. Once when Signora Cuzzoni at a rehearsal declared she would not sing the air 'Falsa Immagine' in his opera 'Ottone,' he worked himself into such a rage that he rushed at her

shouting, 'I always knew you were a very devil, but I shall let you know that I am Beelzebub, the prince of the devils'—he dragged her to the window and vowed that if she did not sing the air at once he would fling her out; and the frightened *prima donna* had immediately to yield and sing it. An abominable trick was once played upon him. He had always a great dislike for the preparatory tuning in an orchestra, and the strict rule at his theatre was that all the instruments should be ready-tuned beforehand. One evening this had been done as usual, when in stole a mischievous wag just before the performance, and carefully untuned every one of the instruments. In the players entered, and Handel took his seat; he gave the signal to begin *con spirito*, when there arose the most horrible din of dissonance conceivable. Handel started up in a fury, overturned the great drum, seized one of the kettle-drums, and hurled it at the leader of the music with such force that his own full-bottomed wig fell off in the effort. Without waiting to pick it up, he rushed to the front of the orchestra in so towering a passion that for once he was bereft of words—while every one else in the place was roaring with laughter.

He usually wore an enormous white wig, and it is said that when things went well at the oratorio it had a certain nod or vibration of its own which manifested his pleasure and satisfaction. If these were absent, it might clearly be known that Handel was out of temper. When composing, his excitement used sometimes to

reach a very high pitch. 'I have heard it related,' says Shield, 'that when Handel's servant used to bring him his chocolate in the morning, he often stood with silent astonishment to see his master's tears mixing with the ink as he wrote.' And a friend, who once called upon him while he was engaged in writing the music to 'He was despised and rejected,' found him *sobbing*, so deeply had the divine pathos of the words affected him. He was always noted for his sturdy independence and self-respect, and this it probably was that excited the enmity of the nobility and rich patrons of art against him from the very first. Great as his talents were acknowledged to be, the dislike entertained for him was greater; and fashionable ladies used actually to fix the dates of their balls and tea-parties on the nights when his performances were taking place, simply for the purpose of doing him harm. A curious proof of this dislike is given in Fielding's 'Tom Jones,' where he says: 'It was Mr. Western's custom every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play on the harpsichord, for he was a great lover of music, and perhaps had he lived in town might have passed for a connoisseur, *for he always excepted against the finest compositions of Mr. Handel.*' But did he care for this? Not a bit. A friend once expressed regret to him at seeing the house so empty, 'Never mind—de music vill sount de petter,' said the brave old musician. Another great man, Dr. Johnson, when asked how he felt when his play 'Irene' was damned, answered, 'Felt? I felt like the monu-

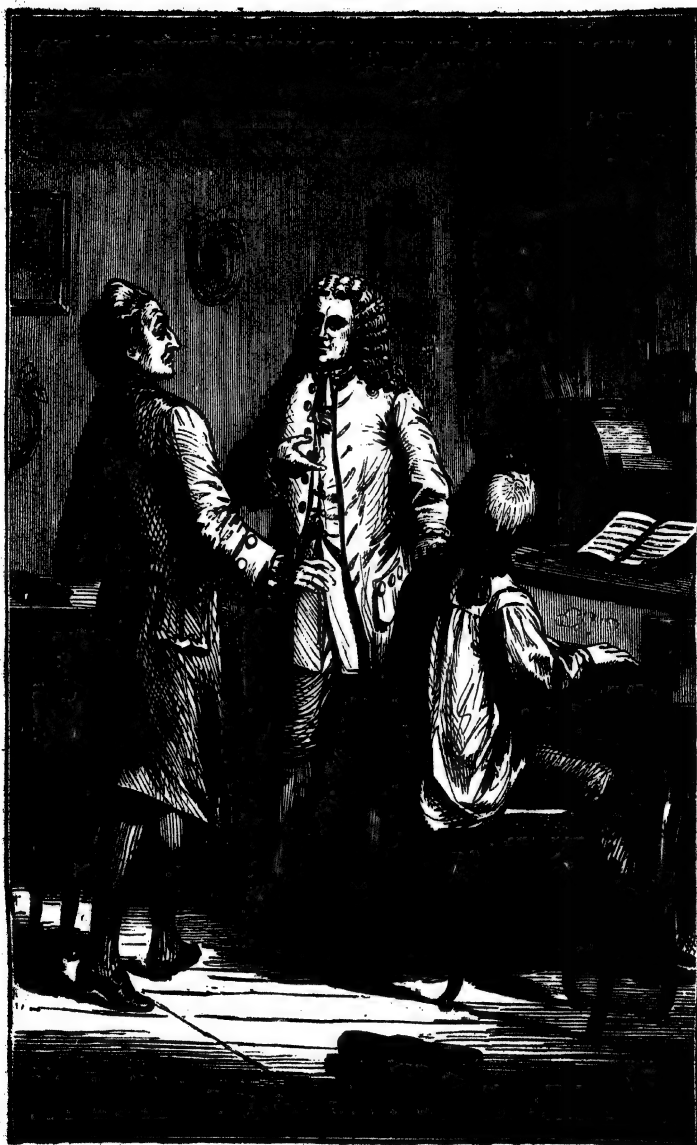


ment !' Handel was plain-spoken, and would not give in to any one if he knew he was in the right. As he used to say, 'If a man cannot think but as a fool, ledt him keep his fool's tongue in his own fool's moud.'

He was a big man in every way, and one of the characteristics for which he was renowned was his enormous appetite. A caricature of the times represents him seated upon a beer-barrel with a ham and fowls hung to the pipes of his organ, a turbot on a pile of books beside him, and the floor around him strewn with oyster-shells. There is a well-known story—that, like so many others, may be true or false—of his once going to a tavern and ordering dinner for *three*. After a while he became impatient at the dinner not being served, and rang to know why it was not brought up. 'We will do so,' the host replied, 'as soon as the company arrive.' 'Den bring up te dinner *prestissimo*,' said Handel, '*I am de gompany*.'

Among musicians Händel must always stand in the highest rank, and there has perhaps not been another one whose works have brought such blessing to the world generally as his have done. 'He is the father of us all,' said Haydn. And Beethoven once said to Moscheles, 'He is the greatest composer that ever lived. I would uncover my head and kneel before his tomb.'





# BACH.

BORN MAY 16, 1685 ; DIED JULY 28, 1750.

*To him music owes almost as great a debt as a religion owes to its founder.*—SCHUMANN.

BACH and HANDEL, the two greatest musicians of the eighteenth century, never met, although on one occasion, when Handel had gone over to Germany from London to engage singers for his opera season, Bach, then a comparatively unknown organist at Cöthen, went over to Halle, a distance only of four German miles, in the hope of meeting the already famous composer, but unfortunately Handel had left the town on the very day of this visit.

The Bach family, for several generations before the birth of this most illustrious member of it, had been a musical one, and, being very numerous, had supplied clever organists to many of the towns of Saxony and Thüringen. In Sebastian's lifetime there are said to have been from twenty-five to thirty Bachs, all related to each other, holding such posts. The founder of the family in Thüringen was one Veit Bach, who, towards the end of the sixteenth century, had fled

from his native home at Pressburg, on the banks of the Danube, in consequence of the persecution of the Protestants, and had settled at Wechmar, near Gotha, as a baker. There is a tradition that he possessed a more than ordinary taste for music, and used to take his lute to the mill, playing it there while the corn was being ground. After him came many Bachs, nearly all of whom were musicians, and we find his great-grandson, Johann Ambrosius, settled in Eisenach, a town memorable in the life of Luther, the great reformer, as 'Hof-organist.' This was the father of the one whose fame was to put that of all the other Bachs into the shade.

Johann Sebastian Bach was born at Eisenach on May 16th, 1685. His father died when he was only ten years of age, and, as his mother was dead some time before, the boy went to live with his elder brother Johann Christoph, who, following the family profession, was established ~~at~~ Ohrdruff as an organist. Here Sebastian received from his brother his first lesson in singing and playing the harpsichord. He had soon mastered the dry exercises that were given him, and wanted to play the grander pieces that his brother performed, but for some reason or other his request was always refused. At that time music was not as generally printed as it is now, and it is possible that the elder brother did not wish the manuscript book of his own favourite pieces to be made use of by any one else, even by the orphan brother under his charge. But

like young Handel, Sebastian was only made more eager to learn by the opposition he encountered. The precious book was kept locked up in a cupboard, but one of the sides of this cupboard consisted of rails with open spaces between them, and the boy could just manage to squeeze his hand through one of these spaces and draw out the book. At night, when every one else in the house was asleep, he used softly to creep down-stairs, secure his treasure, and then return to his garret, where, by the light of the moon—when it shone, for he had no other candle—he copied out laboriously the harpsichord music of composers, once famous but now utterly forgotten, such as Frohberger, Fischer, Buxtehude, and others. Six months of these moonlight labours went on, and at last the copy was completed, but by a cruel mischance his brother soon afterwards discovered and confiscated it, and it was only on Johann Christoph's death, a few years later on, that Sebastian regained his treasure.

The boy, then fourteen years old, was once more thrown on the world ; but having a clear soprano voice, he soon obtained a place as chorister at the Michael Gymnasium at Lüneburg, where a good general education, in addition to musical training, was given to the boys. But soon after entering this school his soprano voice broke, and he was unable to sing in the choir ; although for three years longer he appears to have continued attendance at the school. How he lived during this time it is difficult to say ; but his fare must have been

very scanty, and his lodging very poor. Yet he had delights of his own, and the chiefest was to walk over from Lüneburg to Hamburg, a distance of five German miles, and hear the great organ of the St. Katherine Church there played by Reinken, then accounted one of the most skilful organists and profound musicians of his time. Of Reinken and the organ we shall hear again. There is an anecdote of one of these Hamburg excursions which, even if Bach were not concerned in it, would be worth preserving as an instance of good-heartedness shown in rather a quaint way. He was returning one day from Hamburg to his home, and, passing an inn on the road, was painfully reminded, by the pleasant odours of dinner issuing from the kitchen, of two things—first, the vigorous appetite which comes to one who has trudged so far; and secondly, the fact that he had hardly a copper in his pocket. There must have been something irresistibly appealing in the boy's attitude as he stood there, sniffing the pleasant aroma of the roasted joints, for some one inside noticed him—the window was thrown open, a couple of herrings' heads were flung towards him, and the window was closed again. Possibly Sebastian thought even herrings' heads better than nothing; at any rate he took them up, when, to his astonishment, he found a Danish ducat carefully thrust into each of them; and with this money the boy was not only able to pay for a dinner there and then, but also to defray the cost of another journey shortly afterwards to Hamburg.

One would like to have known more of that unknown giver, with his—or was it her?—delicately kindly way, not too common in this world, of giving help. But the school-days were at last over, and the next we hear of Bach is as a violinist at the Court Chapel of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, a post probably obtained for him by some of his numerous musician relations; and during the same year he was appointed organist, at the moderate salary of fifty florins, besides thirty thalers for board and lodging (about £8, 13s. in English money), of the new church at Arnstadt.

A curious complaint is made against his playing at this place. It is said, that the congregation used to be so astonished by the way in which he played the church tunes that they forgot to join in the singing: this was a great scandal in the eyes of the more bigotedly devout! It is evident that Bach did not get on very comfortably with the authorities, and the absence, for which he obtained leave in 1705, for four weeks to visit Lübeck, to hear the celebrated organist Buxtehude there, being prolonged by him, without leave, to three months, was also, not unnaturally, considered a grave offence against discipline. On his return he was summoned before the Consistory to give an account of himself and explain this delinquency, and also to be taken to task for the extraordinary variations he allowed himself in the chorales.

He did not intend to remain long at Arnstadt, and one reason for this was that he was only waiting for a



better situation before marrying his second cousin, Maria Barbara Bach, (to whom for some time he had been attached.) In the beginning of 1707 he obtained his wish on being appointed organist of St. Blasius' Church at Mühlhausen. He was allowed to fix the amount of his stipend himself, and even allowing for the different value of money then from that of the present day, surely never artist appraised his own worth more modestly ! The following is the statement given in the deed of his appointment :—' 85 gulden (about £7), 3 malters of corn, 2 clafters of wood, one of beech and one of other wood, and 6 schock of small firewood to be brought to his door. He also requests that he may be helped with the loan of a cart in bringing his furniture from Arnstadt.' Bach was married the same year, a few months after he removed to Mühlhausen, and by this marriage he had eight children : five sons, several of whom became distinguished musicians, and three daughters.

In 1708 he paid a visit to Weimar, and played there before the Duke Ernest, who was so delighted with his masterly style that he at once engaged him as court and chamber organist. Here he was able to devote more time than he had previously done to the study of organ-playing and composition, and by degrees his renown began to spread through Saxony and North Germany. In 1712, Handel's old master, Zachau of Halle died, and Bach was offered the post, that then became vacant, of organist at the Liebfrauenkirche in Halle.

Owing to the unreasonable demands of the Consistory, however, Bach declined to accept it. The only important matter in connection with this affair was that, as a specimen of his powers of composition, Bach wrote his magnificent cantata, 'Ich hatte viel Bekümmerniss.' Soon afterwards he was appointed by the Duke conductor of his orchestra and concert-director, and he now began to publish some of the sacred cantatas, which, as a part of the duties of this post, he had to compose.

A proof of the reputation he had acquired is furnished in the story of a musical contest, which took place in 1717 between Bach and a conceited French *virtuoso*, Jean Louis Marchant. Marchant had paid a visit to the Court of Saxony at Dresden, and his elegant and finished style of playing the clavecin and organ had been so much admired there that he received a very good appointment as Court musician. Volumier, the director of the orchestra, however knew how vastly superior in everything to him Bach was, and he invited the latter to Dresden to compete in a public trial of skill against Marchant at a royal concert. Bach came at once. The king invited him to the Court, and the competition was commenced by Marchant playing in a style of great neatness and refinement a number of variations on a French air, which were very warmly applauded. Bach had been standing near, attentively listening. Now came his turn; he sat down at the instrument, and after preluding, as only *he* could, took the same theme as Marchant had treated, and to the

amazement and admiration of the audience extemporised twelve more variations on it of the utmost brilliancy and originality. The next day he proposed another trial of skill to his adversary ; he would give Marchant a number of themes to extemporise on, and the Frenchman should set him a similar task. The challenge was accepted, and the king fixed the day and hour for the new contest, which was to take place in the rooms of Count Fleming, the field-marshal. At the appointed time Bach and a large audience were there, but no French champion appeared. After waiting some time, Count Fleming sent a message to Marchant's lodgings, and it was then discovered that he had quietly slipped away from Dresden early that morning, leaving his German antagonist master of the field. As the contest, therefore, could not take place, Bach played alone, to the delight of the king and courtiers. The present which the king sent him of a hundred louis-d'or—that would have been so welcome to the hard-working and scantily paid musician—by the dishonesty of the servant through whose hands it had to pass, never reached him, but at least he had had the honour of victoriously representing his Fatherland. In the same year he removed to Cöthen as director of the orchestra of Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, a warm patron of the arts, and throughout his life a constant friend of Bach's.

Here he remained for six years. During a short visit which he paid in company with Leopold to Carlsbad, a great calamity befel him. On his return

he heard that his wife, whom he had left in perfect health, had died so suddenly that news of her illness could not be sent to him. Little is known of their married life, but with such a husband as Bach, good-tempered, upright, hard-working, her experience could hardly fail to have been a happy one. However this may be, the first experience had certainly not disinclined Bach himself from matrimony, for we find him in a year and a half afterwards wooing and wedding another bride, Anna Magdalena Wülkens, the daughter of a court musician of the Duke of Weissenfels (Handel's old friend). She was twenty-one years of age, and possessed a beautiful soprano voice. Bach took great pains in teaching her music, with his sons Friedemann and Emanuel as her fellow-pupils, and two books of MS. music of progressive difficulty, entitled '*Clavier Büchlein von Anna Magdalena Bach*,' dated 1722 and 1725, in Bach's own handwriting, are still preserved in the Berlin Royal Library. There were thirteen children of their marriage, seven sons and six daughters, but two only of the sons, both musicians, survived their father.

But pleasant as the society of the prince was, Bach could not be altogether satisfied with his life at Cöthen. The salary was insufficient for the wants of an increasing family, and he had no opportunity there for the work that he most of all desired, the production of Church music on an adequate scale. So, according to his wont, Bach from time to time visited churches throughout the country, where the post of organist happened to

be vacant, and among others he played at the St. Jacobi Kirche at Hamburg. As the organ was a fine one, and the salary larger than that of most places, Bach was desirous of obtaining the post, but it was given to a man immensely his inferior, just because he was able to offer a contribution of 4000 marks to the church funds, which Bach was not able to do. This was about Christmas-time, and the clergyman, Erdmann Neumeister, who can have had nothing to do with the transaction, after reading the gospel of the day, thus satirically commented on the conduct of the authorities: 'If one of the angels who sang at Christ's birth at Bethlehem had come down from heaven and played divinely, and wished to become organist at St. Jacobi but had had no money, he might just as well have flown back again !'

While in Hamburg Bach played on the organ of the Katherin-Kirche, the church that so many years before as a boy he had been so fond of visiting for the purpose of secretly listening to Reinken's skilful organ performances. Reinken, an old man, then ninety-nine years of age, was still living, and was present. Bach was asked to improvise on the well-known chorale 'An Wasserflüssen Babylon,' and when he had finished old Reinken came near, and embraced him with the greatest fervour, saying, 'I thought this art had died out ; now that I see it still lives, I shall die in peace.' It is strange that with the advance of music in so many ways at the present day, this art, once so widely practised, of improvisa-

tion, may now indeed be said almost completely to have died out.

While living at Cöthen Bach wrote a good deal of instrumental music, and, indeed, at one time he was chiefly known as the composer of the 'Wohltemperirte Clavier,' the first part of which was written there, and a number of sonatas and concertos for the violin, clavichord and harpsichord. Besides these compositions, he devoted his spare time to teaching his young wife and his sons music, and to the amusement of constructing a musical clock, still to be seen by the curious at Cöthen. In 1723 he was again a candidate for another post as organist, this time at the Thomas-Schule at Leipzig, and after submitting to a competitive examination with other musicians, for which, as a proof of proficiency in composition, Bach wrote the cantata 'Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe,' he was elected to the office, on which he entered the 1st of June 1723, and which he continued to hold until his death twenty-seven years after.

The duties of this post were by no means light. Every third week he had to inspect the school, which was an 'Alumneum' or charity school, founded in the place of the convent of St. Thomas, when this was done away with after the Reformation—and in Bach's time fifty-five boys were educated, lodged, and generally provided for there—and the hour for commencing work was 5 A.M. in summer and 6 A.M. in winter. He had also to teach the first class music, and make all

arrangements for the singing in four of the Leipzig churches, supplied with choir-boys from the school, and, besides, had to attend funerals, weddings, and concerts, superintending the singing of chorales and other music there. For all this he received the following remuneration: he had lodging and firewood free, about £13 for fixed salary, £2 for wood and candles, and 3s. 10d. interest on a legacy. Besides this he received fees ranging from a thaler upwards for the choir performances on the public occasions mentioned. These terms were after a time considered by the authorities to be too liberal, and they were actually reduced! But Bach contentedly went on doing his work, delighting in the practice of his art, carefully bringing up his large family, and never so happy as in the simple home-life with his wife and children after the long day's toil.

In those days he had little thought of publishing his compositions. He composed no less than 380 cantatas for every Sunday and festival during five years; many of these have perished in the long neglect that they suffered after his death, but 186 for particular days, and 32 without any special reference to the days, are still extant. During these years Bach also wrote his grandest works, the 'Passions-musik.' Some of his biographers mention five of these, but two only remain, the one 'According to St. John,' the other 'According to St. Matthew,' the latter being the grandest and on the noblest scale. This music was a relic of the old Passion Plays, when the crucifixion of our Lord was represented

in a dramatic form in the churches at Easter-time, and chorales, in which the audience joined, were sung. No more fitting music than that of the 'Matthäus-Passion' has ever yet been written describing the greatest of all earthly tragedies; in this Bach emancipates himself from the restraints of the conventional ecclesiastical style of his day; in the choruses are heard the frantic cries of the mob, with the terrible shout for 'Barabbas!' and in the airs and chorales sung by the evangelist and the other disciples there is a tender pathos in the narrative of the Saviour's sufferings and the expression of the simple faith of his followers that has never been surpassed. On the score of this work, as of all his others, Bach wrote the letters S.D.G. '*solī Deo gloria*,' and seldom have they been more fitly used. Yet the men of his time were almost entirely insensible to the grandeur of this 'Passions-musik,' and after its first performance a full hundred years passed by before it was again performed—this time under Mendelssohn's direction at the Berlin Academy in 1829. Another of the greatest works of sacred music composed by him was the Christmas Oratorio written in 1734. This was in six parts, each of which could be used as a separate cantata for Christmas Day and the following festivals of the church, but Bach has given to the whole the name of 'Oratorium Tempore Nativitatis Christi.'

Bach had his troubles at Leipzig as elsewhere, and the governors of the school were not always on good terms with him, as they seem to have thought that he



carried matters with too high a hand, and instead of writing so much elaborate music, would have been better employed in accompanying the boys on their processions and being more of the commonplace pedagogue. But there is not the slightest proof that he neglected a single one of the actual duties allotted to him; indeed all the evidence goes to show that he punctiliously and unvaryingly fulfilled them all. It is just possible that, like Handel, Bach occasionally exhibited his impatience and contempt for the blockheads about him in a way that must have grievously offended these men, who considered themselves his superiors—although we do not hear of him treating them in solemn conclave in the manner in which he once behaved to Görner, a clever organist of St. Thomas, one day when he failed to please the great Cantor. Görner had struck a false chord, and Bach in a passion tore off his wig and flung it at the poor man, shouting, ‘You ought to have been a cobbler instead of an organist!’ One is reminded of Handel’s rage when he hurled a kettledrum at the head of the leader of his discordant orchestra.

But on the whole these latter days of his life flowed on very peacefully: he was happy in his work, his organ-playing, and compositions, and happy with his family and his friends, to whom his house was always open for social intercourse and ‘a little music’ in the evenings. Often quartets were played, Bach taking part in them, and playing his favourite instrument, the viola. He always liked to accompany other performers on the

harpsichord, and one of his diversions was to turn a trio into a quartet by extemporising a fourth part on that instrument. Every year there was a larger social gathering, attended by all the members scattered over the country of the Bach family, and taking place at their homes in the different towns in turn. At this they used all to join in musical performances, first singing a chorale, then ballads, and then choruses that went by the name of 'quodlibets.' In these each singer sang different words and extemporised his own part, but a certain harmony was preserved in the music.

Like most men who have attained to some renown, Bach, in his later years, was often visited by strangers from a distance, and polite and friendly as the kindly-hearted old man always was, we have it on record that occasionally his visitors rather severely tried his patience. It is said that once a shallow-brained, conceited Frenchman annoyed him so much by the frequency of his visits that Bach was at last compelled to make use of a rather curious stratagem to get rid of him.

This Frenchman, M—, not only came once to pay his respects to the great Cantor, but having been kindly received, got into the habit of calling every day, and as he esteemed himself a composer and player of the highest order he would on each occasion sit down to the clavier and remain there for an unconscionable time, playing his poor flimsy pieces, and exasperating to the utmost poor Bach—compelled to listen to such stuff, knowing all the time how his own precious leisure

was being wasted. At last he could not stand it any longer, and he wrote a letter to Ludwig Krebs, who had been one of his best pupils, and was then a celebrated performer and Cantor of Altenburg, to come to his assistance. This was the Krebs of whom his master was fond of saying, 'Only one crab (Krebs) have I ever caught in my brook' (Bach). At once on receiving the summons the young man set off to Leipzig, and, arrived there, after long consultation with his master, a plan of action for the next day was determined on by the two.

As before, the tiresome Frenchman paid his morning visit the next day, and was soon seated as usual, on his own invitation, at the clavier, when there came a knock at the door. 'Come in,' cried Bach, and thereupon appeared a common rustic-looking man in a blue blouse, with hob-nail boots, a slouched hat, and a huge whip in his hand—evidently a wagoner from the country.

'Ah, my worthy friend, welcome!' said Bach; 'you are come just at the right time to show the gentleman what you can do. This is M—from France, a *virtuoso* on the clavier, and this,' turning to the Frenchman and introducing the rustic to him, 'is Herr Cancrinus, a *virtuoso* on the wagoner's whip, though he has also learned to jingle a little on the clavier. Now, Cancrinus, just play us a tune.'

So the wagoner sat down at the instrument, played a short prelude, and began with a very simple air, quite

in accordance with his supposed character, but then with this soon a second air was mingled, soon a third, and all the different parts could still be heard distinctly sounding in a fantasia that now grew louder and louder as with masterly touch the player spread out, as it were, on the clavier all the riches of his marvellous art. The Frenchman stood beside him, gazing almost in a state of stupefaction alternately at the smock-frock of the wagoner and the fingers now flying over the instrument, and extracting from it tunes so lovely with an art so consummate.

When he had finished Bach went up to the Frenchman and said to him with a smile, ‘You see, M—, that is the way that the wagoners play in “our country.”’ M— vanished, and never called again—as completely daunted by Krebs as Marchant had been by Bach himself; and so this not very brilliant stratagem was completely successful.

No fugues have ever been written like those of Bach, where the firm hand of the great master of the science, in all the intricacy through which he works out his themes, is unfailingly guided as much by the poet’s thought as by the design of the profoundly skilful constructor. I recently came upon the following description of one of Bach’s fugues, supposed to be told by an old Manx fisherman in that very charming little book *Fo’c’sle Yarns*, and it is so amusingly and graphically true that my readers will thank me for extracting it:—

*' Well, observe! away goes a scrap,  
 Just a piece of a tune, like a little chap  
 That runs from his mammy; but mind the row  
 There'll be about that chap just now!  
 Off he goes! but whether or not,  
 The mother is after him like a shot—  
 Run, you rascal, the fast you're able,  
 But she nearly nabs him at the gable;  
 But missin him after all: and then  
 He'll give her the imperince of sin:  
 And he'll duck and he'll dive, and he'll dodge and he'll dip.  
 And he'll make a run, and he'll give her the slip,  
 And back again, and turnin, and mockin,  
 And imitatin her most shockin  
 Every way she's movin, you know:  
 That's just the way this tune'll go;  
 Imitatin, changin, hidin,  
 Doublin upon itself, dividin,  
 And other tunes comin wantin to dance with it,  
 But haven't the very smallest chance with it—  
 It's that slippy and swivel—up, up, up!  
 Down, down, down! the little pup  
 Friskin, whiskin; and then a solemn  
 Like marchin in a double column,  
 Like a funeral: or, rather,  
 If you'll think of this ~~imp~~, it's like the father  
 Comin out to give it him, and his heavy feet  
 Soundin like thunder on the street.  
 And he's caught at last, and they all sing out  
 Like the very mischief, and dance and shout,  
 And caper away there most surprisin  
 And ends in a terrible rejsin'.  
 That's Backs, that's fuges . . . '*

A livelier and better prose transcription of one of the master's fugues could hardly have been given!

In 1747 Bach, who, as so often happens, was more appreciated abroad than in his own town, was prevailed

on to pay a visit to Potsdam, and have an interview with Frederick the Great. His second son, Carl Emanuel, was one of the musicians at the Prussian Court, and used to play the clavier at the State concerts. Frederick, who was himself an ardent amateur, and played (for a king) very cleverly on the flute, had several times sent for old Bach to visit him, but it required a considerable amount of persuasion, and finally an almost imperative invitation to induce the old man to undertake the journey. Accompanied by his son Friedemann, also a clever musician, Bach at last set out for Potsdam, arriving at the palace in the evening, just about the time when the concert, which regularly took place before the king sat down for supper, commenced. Frederick was preparing to play a flute concerto with the orchestra, when the list of visitors arrived that evening was put into his hand. Glancing down it his eye caught the name of Bach, and he instantly turned round to the musicians, exclaiming, 'Gentlemen, old Bach has come !' There was to be no concert that night. Bach had gone to his son's apartment, but he was hastily summoned, without having time to change his travelling attire, to the king's presence. Frederick received him with the utmost cordiality and respect, and, after some genial talk, took the old man with him through the apartments of the palace, exhibiting the seven magnificent Silbermann pianos that he possessed, and inviting Bach to try them in succession, while the throng of courtiers

and musicians followed and listened to the marvellous playing of the Saxon master. Bach then asked the king to give him a theme, and when this was done he extemporised on it at great length, and also, at the king's request, played an extempore six-part fugue. All the while Frederick stood behind his chair and was heard to exclaim, 'Only one Bach! only one Bach!' The next day the king took him round the churches in Potsdam that he might play on the organs there, and after taking care that the old man was shown all the sights of interest in Berlin, he bid farewell to him with the greatest warmth and marks of respect. On Bach's return to Leipzig he wrote out the fantasia he had composed on the theme given by the king, enlarging it until it consisted of two fugues, a *ricerca*, nine canons, and a sonata, and this he sent, with one of the deferential letters that it was then the custom to indite by way of dedication to the Prussian king.

But the same calamity that befell his great contemporary was about to fall on him. Ominous signs of his eyesight failing began to show themselves, and though he consulted an oculist of repute, and underwent two operations, they were completely useless, and the medicines given him also greatly enfeebled his general health. One of his last works was a treatise on 'The Art of the Fugue,' showing how almost inexhaustible are the resources of the art of which he himself was probably the greatest exponent that ever lived. In this work he makes out of one theme in two parts no less than fifteen solos, two duets for two pianos,

all in the form of fugues, and four canons. In the last fugue, while still retaining this theme, he works in with it another, based on the notes B A C H (the German name for our B-natural, while our B-flat goes by the name of B). But this fugue was not finished, and his son, Carl Emanuel, added to the ms. this note:— 'While engaged upon this fugue, in which the name of Bach is introduced in counterpoint, the author died.'

Just before his death, being then totally blind, Bach dictated to Altnikol, his son-in-law and pupil, a chorale on the words so pathetically applicable to his case, 'Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein.' A few days before his death he became suddenly better, and was actually able to see and to bear the light; but this was only one of those strange instances that occur of the brightness that comes before the last spark dies out, and in a few hours afterwards a violent fever seized him. When at last he slept again it was the sleep of death, and very quietly he passed away on the 28th of July 1750.

We hear nothing of his funeral, of musicians and friends flocking to the grave to do honour to the great and noble master who was gone from their midst; all we are told is that he was buried in St. John's Churchyard at Leipzig, but there is no cross or monument there to mark his resting-place. Like Mozart, who lies in an unknown grave in the churchyard of St. Marx at Vienna, men cared very little then for the memory of one whose fame has in after days gone out into all the earth. The only record that we have



is in the register of deaths preserved in the Leipzig Town Library, and runs as follows :—‘ *A man*, age 67, Johann Sebastian Bach, musical director and singing master of the St. Thomas School, was carried to his grave in the hearse, July 30th, 1750.’ Ninety-three years after his death, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, to whom we are so much indebted for the study of Bach at the present day, erected a monument to the memory of the grand old Cantor of Leipzig, opposite the house in which he had lived, and under the windows of the study where he had worked so long.

I have said that for a long time his works fell into almost complete oblivion. Many were never published, and now have irretrievably been lost. A curious proof of this neglect is given in a note which may be read on the autograph copy of three violin sonatas now preserved in the Royal Library at Berlin :—‘ This admirable work, in Joh. Seb. Bach’s own handwriting, I found amongst old papers, intended to be sent to a *butter-shop*, in the leavings of the pianist Polchau, at St. Petersburg, 1804.—GEORGE POLCHAU.’ But those days are passed ; Bach is now honoured and his works are now performed as they never were before ; societies even bearing his name have been formed for the study of his compositions, and a host of those to whom his music, breathing as it does the purest spirit of Christian art, has imparted the truest teaching and delight, heartily join in the words of King Frederick—‘ Only one Bach !’





BORN JULY 2, 1714. DIED NOVEMBER 15, 1787.



## GLUCK.

*The truth of expression which brings us it purity of style and grandeur of form is all time: the beautiful pages of Gluck remain always beautiful. Victor Hugo right, 'the heart has no wrinkles.'*

BERLIOZ.

IDEALLY different from many great composers, Gluck's really good work came late in life, and, indeed, before he was fifty, he had produced anything worth remembering.

bering. Of the operas written when he was between thirty and forty, and produced at the Haymarket Theatre in London, Handel said, and with a good deal of justice, 'Sir, they are detestable ! The fellow knows no more counterpoint than my cook !' But it is not too much to say that no works have had such an effect in the lasting reformation of the lyric stage as his 'Orfeo,' 'Alceste,' and the other magnificent works which followed them, all written when he was more than middle-aged.

Christoph Willibald (afterwards Ritter von) Gluck was born on July 2, 1714, at Weidenwang, near Neumarkt, in Germany. His parents were in a humble position in the household of Prince Lobkowitz, at Eisenberg, and he seems at first to have been left to pick up what education he could in the kitchen and the fields, no very satisfactory training-school for him. When he was twelve years of age, however, he was fortunate enough to be sent to the Jesuit School at Komotow, in Bohemia, and here the good fathers gave him his first instruction, not only in ordinary school lore, but also in playing the violin and organ. After he had been there a few years his father died, and the poor youth was left entirely to his own resources. He went to Prague, and having acquired some knowledge of the violin and violoncello, he used to earn a scanty living as an itinerant musician, singing, when he could get an engagement, in the churches, and playing, like Haydn, the violin at fairs and the village dances of the

peasants. The life was hard, and the pay poor enough ; but on one thing the lad had already resolved—a musician he would be and nothing else. In his ramblings he at last reached Vienna, and as, fortunately, he was not quite forgotten in Prince Lobkowitz's household, he was allowed to play there, and the Prince and his friends listening after dinner to the youth's playing, nodded approvingly, and said, ' Really, not so bad ! There is talent, decidedly some talent, in the fellow ! '

In those days the great thing was to have a patron ; and Gluck, who, thanks to his own energy, self-reliance, and study of human nature, was always successful in securing wealthy friends, soon gained an influential patron in the person of Prince Melzi, who gave him a place in his own private band. And this was not all, for soon afterwards the Prince took his protégé to Milan, and placed him there under the instructions of Sammartini, a learned theorist.

So now the young musician was fairly launched on his career. Very soon he began to compose operas, which were produced at the theatres of Milan, Venice, and Turin, and these, like Handel's early operas, quickly caught the melody-loving ear of the populace, and were immensely successful. So great, indeed, was their success, and so considerable the fame they brought to the composer, that Lord Middlesex thought he was doing a good stroke of business in securing him as composer-in-chief for the King's Theatre in London. But when Gluck arrived in this country in 1745 the

times were very unpropitious. The Scotch Rebellion then absorbed the public interest, and people were too busy discussing the political situation in their coffee-houses and drawing-rooms to have inclination or time to go to the theatre. What was this new piece, 'The Fall of the Giants' (*La Caduta dei Giganti*) by Mr. Gluck, to them, at a time when the fall of the English Ministry, and even of the reigning sovereign, was possible? And, truth to tell, the new opera was poor stuff; and neither did 'Artamene,' an old opera touched up again, or 'Piramo e Tisbe,' a *pasticcio* or compilation of pretty airs from his other works, succeed any better. Indeed, if Gluck had finished his artistic career at this time, Handel's criticism would have been a sufficiently fair judgment on it, and Gluck's name would have had no chance of being remembered 'among the immortals.'

But one of his most serviceable qualities was that of rare good sense; and though discomfited and sorely mortified by his failure in London, he was able calmly to ponder over his defeat, and learn the useful lesson which it contained. And how well he learnt it, and what use he made of it, will be seen hereafter. Shortly before he left London, he appeared at the theatre in a very unexpected character. Philosophically consoling himself with the idea that if people would not listen to him as a composer they might as a performer, he played, as the *Morning Advertiser* of the day says, 'at the little theatre in the Haymarket, a concerto on twenty-six drinking glasses tuned with spring water,

accompanied by the whole band, being a new instrument of his own invention, upon which he performs whatever may be done on a violin or harpsichord.' Gluck was certainly a specimen of the man (almost always certain to succeed in the end) who can turn his hand to anything—even the musical glasses.

From London he went to Paris, and thence to Vienna, where for some time he lived in retirement, quietly studying that vexed question of music and the drama, which, in these later days, Wagner, the legitimate successor of Gluck, through Weber, has again made so prominent. The Abbé Arnaud had said, 'Italian opera is only a concert for which the play is the pretext.' Gluck began to find out that this was true, and that art had been forgotten in the too eager desire to please, no matter how. He resolved to make a change, and to begin his work again on an entirely new basis. But in the meantime he must live, so, being invited to Rome and Naples, he composed 'Telemacco,' 'La Clemenza di Tito,' and other operas, which, in form at least, differed little from the ordinary florid Italian operas of the day. At Florence he made a very valuable acquaintance. There he met Ranieri di Calzabigi, a poet of far superior order to those whose business it was to turn out opera-books for composers, and it was in collaboration with his new friend that Gluck wrote his first opera in the reformed style, 'Orfeo.' This was produced in Vienna in 1762, and created a great sensation, actually obtaining a run



of twenty-eight nights—then almost unprecedented. But he was not able at once to release himself from the fetters of the still fashionable florid style, for he always took great pains to pose as the courtier, and having princes and archduchesses among his pupils, he had to supply them with the musical fare that they could appreciate. One of the unsubstantial Italian operas written by him about this time, 'Il Parnasso Confuso,' received the extraordinary honour of being acted with four archduchesses in the cast, and the archduke Leopold playing the accompaniment on the clavecin. I question whether there are any royal musicians who could do this now.

In the same style as 'Orfeo,' were 'Alceste' and 'Paride e Elena,' which followed it. Poet and musician were here of one accord. Both discarded the foolish, tasteless superfluity of ornament in diction and music, and aimed at truthful expression of the emotions rather than at the brilliant display of tropes and *florituri*, trills, cadences, and pretty conceits. The reception given to 'Alceste' did not please the composer, although it was frequently performed, and obtained a considerable share of the popular favour. But the critics fell foul of it, and Gluck took an opportunity of very savagely castigating them in a dedicatory letter written by him on the publication of 'Paride e Elena.' Gluck was, like his successor Wagner, no mean hand with his pen, but the fact that he took the trouble to reply to their censure

shows that he was a little more sensitive than he need have been.

Of the new style of operatic composition introduced by him, he wrote the following memorable words, the lesson of which is as valuable now as it was when they were first written :—‘My purpose has been to restrict the art of music to its true object—that of aiding the effect of poetry by giving greater expression to the words and scenes, but without interrupting the action of the plot, and without weakening the impression by needless instrumentation.’

Whatever the cause, Gluck began to meditate a change of scene, and an invitation, sent to him from the French Académie Royale to visit Paris, made him decide to remove to that capital. In this purpose he was warmly encouraged by a Bailli du Rollet, an attaché of the French Embassy, an enthusiastic supporter of Gluck’s new musical theory. Du Rollet was also something of a poet, and in conjunction with the composer he put together the libretto of a new opera which was to be bestowed on the Parisians, ‘*Iphigénie en Aulide*,’ founded on Racine’s play. In 1773 Gluck, then being fifty-nine years of age, set out for Paris, where it was fated that the most important part of his life was to be lived.

Gluck found a potent patroness in his former pupil, Marie Antoinette, now the Dauphiness of France ; in fact, she soon was at the head of an organised party in his favour, and almost as much in earnest and excited

over the fate of his new opera as he was himself. And when 'Iphigénie' was first performed, she led the applause, which, as the opera proceeded, became spontaneous enough—soldiers and courtiers waving their swords, and the multitude, carried away by the beauty and dramatic truth of the music, vehemently applauding. Sophie Arnould, the witty and charming actress, was an admirable *Iphigénie*, and a M. Larrivée, who was accustomed to sing so much through his nose that the people in the pit, when applauding him after a song, used to say, 'That nose has really a magnificent voice,'—forgot for that evening his nasal twang and was a magnificent *Agamemnon*. Marie Antoinette was in ecstasies over this success, and, in a letter to Christine her sister, says—'A glorious triumph at last, my dear Christine. On the 19th we had the first performance of Gluck's 'Iphigénie.' I was quite delighted with it, and nothing else is now talked of.'

Then came 'Orfée et Eurydice,' adapted from the Vienna setting of the same piece. Mr. Sutherland Edwards, in his *History of the Opera*, relates some very amusing incidents in connection with the production of this opera. Gluck's artistic soul was greatly vexed by the obstinate pretensions of the male dancer, Vestris (who maintained that there were only three great men in Europe—Voltaire, Frederick the Great, and himself). When the rehearsals were going on, this great man indulgently said to the composer, 'Write me the music of a *chaconé*, Monsieur Gluck!'

'A *chacone*!' was the indignant answer; 'do you think the Greeks, whose manners we are endeavouring to depict, knew what a *chacone* was?' 'Did they not?' Vestris imperturbably replied: 'Then they are indeed much to be pitied.' This was the man who once said, 'If *le dieu de la danse* (a title he had given himself) touches the ground from time to time, he does so in order not to humiliate his comrades.' It was not easy to drill the actors into the proper expression and style of acting. Here is a story of an attempt which an actress, Marthe le Rochois, made to improve the acting of another one, Desmatins, who took the part of Medea deserted by Jason, 'Inspire yourself with the situation,' she said, 'fancy yourself in the poor woman's place. If you were deserted by a lover whom you adored, what would you do?' 'I should look out for another,' was the reply of the practically-minded girl.

Gluck at rehearsal must have been an interesting sight, and it is not to be wondered at that the rehearsals of 'Orfée' were crowded; it became quite the fashionable thing for the courtiers to attend them. On sitting down in the orchestra his invariable plan was to take his coat off; he then removed his wig, and substituted for it a cotton nightcap of the most primitive fashion, and thus at his ease, in his shirt-sleeves and nightcap, he comfortably conducted. At the end, it is said, that he had never any trouble in resuming these artifices of dress, as dukes and marquises used to contend for the honour of handing them to him.

The fact is that Gluck, smiled on and supported as he was by Marie Antoinette, had become an important personage, and the fine gentlemen and nobles of the court found they could not with impunity treat him with the usual disdain and brutality they bestowed on everybody beneath themselves. A story, for which I am again indebted to Mr. Sutherland Edwards (one of the pleasantest writers and ablest musical critics in London), gives a signal example of this. The rehearsal of 'Orfée' one day was going on, through some caprice of the lady, in the apartments of Sophie Arnould, and while she was singing, and every one was busily at work, in walked the Prince d'Hennin, who was nicknamed the 'Prince of Dwarfs.' The piece went on; and as this was not a grand rehearsal, all the vocalists were seated. Interrupting Sophie in the middle of her air, this *grand seigneur* said with a loud voice, 'I believe that it is the custom in France to rise when any one enters the room, especially if it be a person of some consideration.'

Gluck in a rage sprang up and glared at the prince, calling out to him—

'The custom in Germany, sir, is to rise only for those whom we esteem.' Then turning to poor Sophie he said, 'I perceive, Mademoiselle, that you are not mistress in your own house. I leave you, and shall not set foot here again.'

Marie Antoinette was exceedingly annoyed when she heard of this quarrel, and she compelled the prince to call upon the composer, and make amends for the

insult he had offered him ; rather a bitter pill for this 'person of consideration.'

The dauphiness was again so delighted with Gluck's work, that after the success of 'Orfée' she granted him a pension of 6000 francs, and the same sum in addition to be received by him for every new work that he bestowed on the French stage.

There is an air in 'Orfée' that is an especial favourite with contralto singers, and never fails to produce a deep impression by its marvellous beauty and dramatic power—'Che farò.' Those who have heard Madame Viardot Garcia sing this air can never forget the effect it produced.

After 'Alceste,' re-arranged for the French stage, and produced with the utmost success, Gluck set to work on the composition of a new opera, 'Armida,' which he intended should be his answer to all his detractors,—his *chef-d'œuvre*. To the dauphiness he said, in a burst of self-satisfaction, 'The opera will soon be finished, and indeed it will be superb.' And to his old friend du Rollet he writes, 'I have put forth all the little strength still left in me in order to finish "Armida." I must confess I should like to finish my career with it.' But he did not then anticipate the stirring times and the hard fighting still before him. Marie Antoinette was not the only female potentate in France ; there was another, less respectable, but equally powerful, the notorious Madame du Barry. As the dauphiness had her pet musician, Madame du Barry must have hers

too, and so she sent to Rome and ordered a musician! In due time Piccinni, who was really a talented composer, appeared in Paris, and the famous war of the Gluckists and Piccinnists soon began. 'Monsieur, êtes-vous Gluckiste ou Piccinniste?' became a shibboleth, on the answer to which almost life or death depended. It was known that Piccinni's 'Rolando' was to be produced a few months after Gluck's 'Armida,' and expectation ran high.

Marie Antoinette, now Queen of France, still staunchly stood by her protégé, and Gluck cannot be said to have neglected any means of retaining her friendship. The Princess de Lamballe, in her diary, mentions repeatedly the intense interest which the queen showed in the progress of 'Armida,' and little pieces like the following show some of the means which the diplomatic Gluck took to please her Majesty. Addressing the Princess de Lamballe one day he said—

'Ah, my dear princess, all I now want to raise me to the seventh heaven are two such beautiful heads as that of her Majesty and your own!' 'If you only want that, Monsieur Gluck, we can be painted for you.' 'No, no, you do not understand me—I mean *living* heads: my actresses are very ugly, and Armida and her *confidantes* ought to be very lovely!' Evidently the compliment succeeded with the princess, for she thought it sufficiently remarkable to be inserted in her diary.

Greatly as Gluck prized his own 'Armida,' and im-

mense as was the popularity it afterwards attained, the first production in 1777 does not seem to have been attended with great *éclat*. Perhaps the public were too much excited just then with the prospect of the approaching performance of Piccinni's 'Rolando.' This had taken some time to compose, for Piccinni laboured under the disadvantage of not knowing a word of French, and Marmontel, the author of the libretto, had to write down under each French word its Italian equivalent, a labour which made Marmontel say that he was not only Piccinni's poet, but also his dictionary. When it was produced, its graceful melodies, and smooth sparkling music, produced an extraordinary success, and it could not be denied that in the first encounter the Italian had the best of it. Even Marie Antoinette appears to have swerved from her fidelity to 'ce cher Gluck;' for soon after 'Rolando' was given, she appointed Piccinni her singing-master, a post, of course, of great honour, but also of great expense, as the teacher received nothing for his labour, but had to pay for his journeys to and from the palace, his courtly attire, and the costly binding of the operas presented by him from time to time for his royal pupil's study.

This rivalry was taken advantage of, though certainly not in the most honourable way, by Devismes, the astute manager of the Opera. What an exciting contest it would be—what an amusing affair for everybody—if Gluck and Piccinni could both be set to work on the same piece, and so fight out the 'battle of the styles'



under the same conditions ! Only the worst of it would be, that the first piece performed, if successful, would destroy any chance of the other having a fair hearing. This Piccinni, who had a far higher opinion of Gluck's merits than his supporters had, represented plaintively to Devismes, and the latter earnestly assured him that his own opera should be given first, and Gluck's second. Probably an assurance exactly similar was given to Gluck, and the two composers, taking the libretto given them, '*Iphigénie en Tauris*,' set to work upon their rival labours.

But was it that the Italian found the want of his dictionary, and made only slow progress, or had the manager given the book to Gluck some time before handing a copy to Piccinni? However this may have been, when Piccinni had completed two acts of his piece, he was horror-struck one morning to hear that Gluck's was already finished, and had been put in rehearsal at the opera. He of course rushed off to Devismes, demanding to know the meaning of this ; but the manager very coldly informed him that it could not be helped ; he had received a royal command to produce the opera at once ; he profoundly regretted, etc. etc. The poor Italian was completely outmanœuvred, and had to submit to this trick as well as he might. Certainly if Gluck had any share in it, it was very little creditable to him ; but as the whole rivalry was more an affair of their partisans than of the men themselves—for Gluck and Piccinni several times met

on very friendly terms—it is more probable that he knew nothing about it.

Unluckily for the Italian, Gluck's 'Iphigénie' proved to be a masterpiece, and then and ever since it has been acknowledged to be his greatest work. How profoundly Gluck studied dramatic truth in his writings is shown in the story of an incident that took place at one of the rehearsals of this piece. Orestes, after slaying Clytemnestra, is alone in prison, and flinging himself on a bench, exclaims, '*Le calme rentre dans mon cœur.*' But how is this—that the deep murmur of the 'cellos and basses, and shrill cries of the violins, are still heard? Struck by the contradiction between the sentiment of the words and the accompaniment, the players stopped, thinking that the copyist must have made some mistake, but Gluck turned and shouted '*Il ment ! il a tué sa mère.*' Compare with this the grand scene in Wagner's 'Tristan und Isolde,' where King Mark demands the secret of the fatal love between the two, and as Tristan refuses to reveal it, softly murmured in the orchestra we hear the 'motif' of the love-potion, the secret of the woful bond that for ever had united Tristan and Isolde.

Piccinni was filled with such consternation on hearing this magnificent music, and comparing it with his own tunes, so tame and suavely commonplace, that he begged to be allowed to withdraw from the bargain to produce his own 'Iphigénie.' But the cruel Devismes was inexorable, and soon after Gluck's, Piccinni's piece

was played. The first night the public seemed to reserve their opinion upon it, and the second night another incident in the chapter of accidents befell the unlucky Italian. Mademoiselle Laguerre, who took the principal character, was most indubitably drunk. She staggered and stammered, made eyes at the pit, and altogether disgraced herself.

‘This is not Iphigenia in Tauris,’ said Sophie Arnould, her witty and malicious rival; ‘it is Iphigenia in Champagne!’

The king happened to be present that evening, and in exercise of the despotic power which he wielded for his subjects’ good, he consigned the young lady to prison for a couple of days. On her reappearance she sang so well, and so cleverly gave a special meaning to some lines expressive of remorse that the public forgave her, and she was restored to favour, but Piccinni’s ‘Iphigénie en Tauris’ was not so fortunate. The composer had lost, and this time the victory rested with the German.

After writing ‘Echo et Narcisse,’ which was something of a failure, Gluck set to work upon another opera, ‘Les Danaïdes,’ but an apoplectic stroke compelled him to give up the work, which he handed over to his pupil Salieri (Mozart’s crafty rival) to finish. Gluck had made an ample fortune—about 700,000 francs by his four operas—and in 1780 he wisely determined, being then sixty-six years of age, to retire to spend his last days in quiet at Vienna. He left the

field where still Gluckists and Piccinnists wrangled over the merits of their champions, and tranquilly spent his few remaining years in retirement, where, nevertheless, he was frequently visited by the great and illustrious of the world, among others the Emperor and Empress of Russia, and found some consolation in the knowledge that he was not yet forgotten. And indeed in his works there was that imperishable stuff that even now, a century after his death, has preserved Gluck's music fresh in the remembrance and love of all who care for art. He was struck down by a second attack of apoplexy in 1787, and died on 15th November.

Of his personal appearance, I find the following pleasant little sketch given by Dr. Burney in his *Journal of a Musical Tour in 1773*, describing a visit to the composer when he lived at Paris in the Faubourg St. Marc :—‘He is very well housed there, has a broad garden, and a great number of neat and elegantly furnished rooms. He has no children. Mdme. Gluck and his niece who lives with him came to receive us at the door, as well as the veteran composer himself. He is much pitted with the smallpox, is very coarse in figure and look, but very soon got into a good humour, and he talked, sang, and played,’ as Countess Thun observed, ‘more than she ever knew him do at any other time.’ Of his habits when composing M. Bombet tells the following curious story :—‘In order to warm his imagination and to transport himself to Aulis or Sparta, he was accustomed to place himself in the middle of a beautiful meadow.

In this situation, with his piano before him and *a bottle of champagne on each side*, he wrote in the open air his two "Iphigénies," his "Orfée," and some other works. I only know one other composer who has surpassed the oddity of this arrangement. Signor Anfossi, a very promising Italian composer, who unfortunately died young, always found a special inspiration in the odours of "smoking-hot fowls and Bologna sausages!"





BORN MARCH 31, 1732. DIED MAY 31, 1809.

## HAYDN.

*There is no one who can do everything,—namely, be waggish, and then move us profoundly, and excite our laughter, and again touch our hearts deeply, and all this with equal mastery,—except Joseph Haydn.*

MOZART.

No composer has ever given greater or purer pleasure by his compositions than is given by 'papa' Haydn; there is an unceasing flow of cheerfulness and lively tune in his music; even in the most solemn pieces, as in his Masses, the predominant feeling is that of gladness; as he once said to Carpani: 'At the thought of God my heart leaps for joy and I cannot help my music doing the same.' But it is not alone as the writer of graceful and beautiful music that Haydn has a claim on our remembrance; he has been truly called the 'father of the symphony.' Mozart once said. 'It was from Haydn that I first learned the true way to compose quartets;' and 'The Creation' which must ever be counted one of the masterpieces of oratorio music, was his work.

His family were of the people, his father being a master wheelwright at Rohrau, a small Austrian village on the borders of Lower Austria and Hungary; and his



mother having been employed as a cook in the castle of Count Harrach, the principal lord of the district. Joseph Haydn was born on March 31, 1732, the second child of his parents, and as ten brothers and sisters afterwards came into the world it can easily be understood that his lot was not a very luxurious one. His parents were simple, honest people of the labouring class, very ignorant, but, like most German peasants, with a certain love for and facility in music, not quite so common in this country. Haydn's father had a good voice and could sing well, accompanying himself on the harp, though he did not know a single note of written music. Then there was the village schoolmaster, who could actually play the violin, and whom little Joseph watched with wondering eyes extracting those marvellously sweet sounds from his wooden instrument, until with the child's spirit of imitation, as his parents sang their 'volkslieder,' the little fellow, perched on the stone bench, gravely handled two pieces of wood of his own, as if they were bow and fiddle, keeping exact time and flourishing the bow in the approved fashion of the schoolmaster. From this very little incident came an important change in his life, for a relation, Johann Mathias Frankh of Hainburg, happened to be present on one occasion, and thinking he saw an aptitude for music in the boy, offered to take him into his own school at Hainburg, where accordingly young Haydn went at the age of six years.

There he remained for two years, making rapid

progress in singing and in playing all sorts of instruments, among others the clavier, violin, organ, and drum. He said afterwards with the unaffected piety, far removed from cant, that was characteristic of him, 'Almighty God, to whom I render thanks for all his unnumbered mercies, gave me such facility in music that by the time I was six years old I stood up like a man and sang masses in the church choir, and could play a little on the clavier and violin.' Of Frankh, a very strict but thorough and most painstaking teacher, he also said afterwards, 'I shall be grateful to that man as long as I live, for keeping me so hard at work, though I used to get more flogging than food;' and in Haydn's will he remembered Frankh's family, leaving his daughter a sum of money and a portrait of Frankh himself, 'my first instructor in music.'

The story of the boy's drum-playing is associated with a certain village procession, in which, the drummer being suddenly missing, little Joseph, after hastily being instructed in the stroke, was installed in his place, but the boy was so small that the drum had to be carried on the back of one of his comrades who was a hunchback and of the same size as he. The drums carefully preserved in the choir of Hainburg church are supposed to vouch for the authenticity of this story. Many years afterwards at one of Salomon's concerts in London, Haydn astonished young Smart (Sir George Smart of later years) by showing him *propria manu* the way in which he wished the drum to be played. The next

change was a decided rise in life for the boy. The way in which it came about is very pleasantly told in an anonymous article which appeared in a Vienna newspaper many years ago, and is said to have been written by one who knew Haydn personally. 'Reutter the Vienna Capellmeister and court-composer, paid a visit to Anton Palmb, the pastor of Hainburg, and while there inquired if there were any boys who could sing sufficiently well to be chosen as choristers for the great St. Stephen's Church at Vienna.' Little Haydn, then eight years old, was proposed, and Reutter immediately sent for him to the schoolmaster's house. Haydn, according to the custom of the day, and for the sake of cleanliness, wore a bob-wig, and his dress was as poor as possible. 'I was a queer little urchin,' says Haydn himself.

'There happened to be some cherries on the dean's table, and the scantily fed boy could not take his eyes off them. Reutter observed this and gave him some handfuls in his hat. He then made him sing some Latin and Italian strophes, the meaning of which Haydn did not in the least understand. But Reutter seemed to be satisfied, and then asked him if "he could execute a shake." "No," answered Haydn, "nor can my cousin here either."'

'The schoolmaster looked annoyed and Reutter burst out laughing. Reutter then showed him how to press his tongue against his teeth and gave him some other hints. Haydn imitated these so well that at the

third attempt he succeeded. "You shall remain with me," said Reutter, and thus it was that at the age of eight, Haydn became a chorister boy in St. Stephen's Church at Vienna.'

Haydn used to say that he never afterwards could hear a long shake without thinking of those delightful cherries associated with his first shake. The result of this examination was that Joseph was admitted as a chorister into the Cantorei or training-school of St. Stephen's, having to sing in the cathedral choir, and study music, besides Latin, writing and arithmetic, singing and playing on several instruments. It was to this school, it will be remembered, that Schubert was afterwards admitted and owed much of his musical training. Here for five or six years Haydn remained; the house in which he lived was close to the great entrance to the cathedral, and from his garret window he looked out upon the magnificent spire. His days were spent in singing in the choir, studying whatever his master would teach him (but Reutter, either from indolence or fear of the boy becoming a dangerous rival, hardly instructed him at all), and playing the pranks to which choir-boys from time immemorial have been addicted. Still, ignorant as he was, Haydn began to feel the stirrings of the spirit of music within him; he wrote, but got very little encouragement in his efforts. But he knew nothing of the rules of composition. He said afterwards: 'At that time I thought it was all right if the page was pretty well filled.' Reutter once

happened to come upon a 'Salve Regina' of his, written in twelve parts, and roughly advised him to try two to begin with, but the advice was of little use without the instruction, which the Capellmeister would not help him to obtain. And as time went on, his prospects did not improve. His brother Michael (afterwards a celebrated musician at Salzburg) joined the choir, and as Joseph's voice began to crack—the Empress Maria Theresa once said that young Haydn's voice was more like a cock's crowing than anything else—he had to resign the leading parts in the choir, and his days at the Cantorei were now numbered. Reutter seems for some reason or other to have had a grudge against him, and a small offence was made the pretence for casting the boy adrift in the world. Haydn had got a new pair of scissors, and the pigtail of one of his schoolfellows irresistibly suggested an opportunity for their use. The fatal scissors met, and the pigtail was severed, but Reutter condemned poor Haydn to a caning and then to be expelled.

For some years he seems to have lived a miserable, struggling life, giving lessons, playing the organ in churches, and studying when and where he could. He had a few pupils at the moderate remuneration of two florins a month, and he had contrived to obtain possession of an old worm-eaten clavier, on which he used diligently to practise in the garret in the Kohlmarkt, where he lived. A pitiable description is given of the lodging he then occupied. It was on the sixth story,

in a room without stove or window. In winter his breath froze on his thin coverlet, and the water that in the morning he had to fetch himself from the spring for washing was frequently changed into a lump of ice before his arrival in that elevated region. Life was indeed hard, but he was constantly at work, and having made a precious 'find' on an old bookstall one day of Fux's '*Gradus ad Parnassum*,' in a very dilapidated condition, but very cheap, he was ardently preparing himself for the life—he now vowed should be his—of a composer.

All who have read George Sand's charming romance '*Consuelo*,' the best story of artistic life that has ever been written, will remember the part that Joseph Haydn plays in it, and how by Consuelo's advice he enters the service of Porpora, the Italian composer, for the purpose of gradually ingratiating himself with the maestro, and obtaining instruction from him. This is actually founded on fact, for it is undoubtedly true that Haydn was engaged in a menial capacity in Porpora's household for a time, and afterwards was promoted to the post of accompanist during an artistic tour which the Venetian composer made in Germany. The following is the scene, soon after Consuelo's and Haydn's arrival at Porpora's house in Vienna, where the crusty old musician, much to his alarm, has the first inkling of his servant's talent, and is so pleasantly told that despite its length I must insert it:—

'One morning Joseph, while engaged in sweeping Porpora's

ante-chamber, forgot that the partition was thin, and his master's sleep light; he began mechanically to hum a musical phrase which came into his mind, accompanying the rhythm with the movements of his brush on the floor. Porpora, angry at being awakened before his time, turned over on his bed, tried to go to sleep again, but, pursued by that young and fresh voice singing with correctness and ease a very graceful and well-constructed phrase, found it was no use; he jumped up, threw on his dressing-gown and went to look through the keyhole, half charmed with what he heard, half enraged against the artist who so unceremoniously had been composing in his house before he himself got up. But what a surprise! It is Beppo who is singing and dreaming, and goes on with his tune while pursuing with a preoccupied air his household work.

"What is that you are singing?" says the *maestro* with a voice of thunder, opening the door suddenly.

Joseph, dumfounded, like a man awakened with a start, was very nearly throwing away his brush and dust-pan and taking to flight at once; but though for some time he had lost the hope of becoming Porpora's pupil, he still was happy in hearing Consuelo working with the *maestro*, and in receiving lessons from his generous friend in secret when the composer was absent. Not for all the world did he wish to be driven away, so he did his best to remove his master's suspicions.

"I was singing?" he said, quite out of countenance; "alas, master, I don't know what it was."

"Do people sing they don't know what? It's false!"

"I assure you, master, I don't know what I was singing. You've frightened me so much that I've quite forgotten it. I know I've done very wrong to sing near your chamber. I was dreaming; I thought I was far away—all alone; I said to myself, now you can sing, there's no one here to tell you, 'Be quiet, blockhead, you are singing out of tune. Be quiet, you brute, you will never be able to learn music.'"

"Who told you you sang out of tune?"

"Everybody."

"And I, I tell you," shouted the *maestro* in a severe tone, "you don't sing out of tune. And who tried to teach you music?"

"But . . . well, master Reutter, whose hair my friend Keller

dresses, and who drove me from his class, saying I should never be anything but an ass."

'Joseph already knew enough of the *maestro's* antipathies to know that he thought very little of Reutter, and indeed he had all along counted on this to help him to gain Porpora's good graces if Reutter tried to injure him in the *maestro's* opinion. But Reutter, in the rare visits that he had paid, did not deign to recognise his old pupil in the ante-chamber. "Reutter's an ass himself," murmured Porpora between his teeth; "but that's nothing to do with it; I want you to tell me where you got that phrase." And he sang the notes Joseph had so forgetfully made him listen to ten times over.

"Oh, that!" said Haydn, who began to augur better of his master's disposition, but did not quite trust him yet, "it's something I heard the signora sing—"

"Consuelo, my daughter? I don't know it. So—you listen at doors, do you?"

"Oh no, Sir! but the music, it comes from room to room down to the kitchen, and one can't help hearing it."

"I don't like being served by people who have such good memories, and who go about singing unpublished ideas in that way. You'll put your things together to-day, and go to-night to find some other place."

However, in the end Consuelo makes it up between them, and Porpora is induced to give poor Joseph occasional lessons. About this time Haydn received a commission from Felix Kurz, a comic actor of the Stadt-theater, to put a farce of his 'Der neue krumme Teufel,' to music. This farce, of which the words still remain, though the music has been lost, was very successful, and was played in Vienna, Prague, Berlin, and a number of other towns. The well-known story of Haydn's 'Tempest Music' is connected with this. In one part of this piece a terrible storm was supposed to be raging, and the accompanying music must of



course be suitably descriptive, but the difficulty was that Haydn had never seen the sea, therefore had not the slightest notion of what a storm at sea was like. Kurz tries to describe the waves running mountains high, the pitching and tossing, the roll of thunder, and the howling of the wind; and Haydn produces all sorts of ugly, jerky, and noisy music, but none of it is in the remotest degree like a storm at sea, or anywhere else. At last, after Kurz had become hoarse with his nautical disquisitions, and Haydn's fingers were tired of scrambling all over the piano, the little musician in a rage crashed his hands down on the two extremes of the instrument, exclaiming, 'Let's have done with this tempest!'

'Why, *that's it*, that's the very thing!' shouted the clown, jumping up and embracing him. And with this crash and a run of semi-tones to the centre of the piano this troublesome tempest was most satisfactorily represented.

When, many years afterwards, Haydn was crossing the Straits of Dover to England, amid his sufferings he could not help laughing at the ludicrous recollections of this early experience of his.

Things still went on improving, and Haydn, who was always lucky in the patrons he secured (at least according to the notion about patrons that then prevailed), was invited to the country house of Herr von Fürnberg, a wealthy amateur, to stay there and compose quartets for him, a style of music for which von Fürn-

berg had an especial liking. To his prompting it is that we owe the lovely series of quartets which Haydn wrote,—still, when played by Joachim or Norman Neruda, Ries, Strauss, and Piatti, as fresh and full of serene beauty as when first tried over by the *virtuosi* of Weinzirol. The next piece of good fortune was Haydn's appointment as director of the band and composer to Count Ferdinand Morzin at Lukavec near Pilsen, and here in 1759 his first symphony was written. His salary was very small, only 200 florins a year (or £20) with board and lodgings, but on the strength of it he unfortunately determined on the serious step of embarking in matrimony. A barber named Keller is said to have been very kind to him in the days of his poverty, and out of gratitude Haydn gave music lessons to his daughters. One of them, the youngest, was very pretty, and Haydn fell in love with her. But she became a nun, and the father then prevailed upon Haydn to marry the elder one, who was three years older than he, a sour-tempered, bigoted, and abominably selfish woman, who contributed little to the happiness of his life, and was always bringing priests and friars to the house and worrying her good-tempered husband to compose masses and other church music for these men.

Count Morzin was compelled to give up his band in 1761, but Haydn did not remain long without employment, as Prince Esterhazy, who had heard his symphonies at Morzin's house, engaged him to assist

Werner, his old Capellmeister. As director of Prince Esterhazy's band, Haydn was fated to remain for many years living at Esterház, the Prince's country seat, composing there nearly all his operas and songs, and many of his symphonies. The story of his first interview with Prince Esterhazy so forcibly illustrates the very different relations which then subsisted between musicians and their patrons from those to which we are accustomed at the present time, that I must give it, as related by M. Fétis, in his '*Biographie Universelle*,' premising that Haydn, though engaged by the Prince as one of his household, had never been admitted to an audience until a friendly musician by playing one of his symphonies introduced him again to the notice of his magnificent patron. Prince Esterhazy, liking the music, inquired whom it was written by, and Haydn, poor and shabbily dressed, was then led up to him as the author.

'What! is the music by this Moor?' (Haydn's complexion was very dark). 'Well, Moor, from this moment you are in my service. What's your name?'

'Joseph Haydn, your excellence.'

'But I remember that name—you are already one of my household! How is it that I have not seen you before?' Haydn hardly dared reply. 'Well, go and dress yourself like a Capellmeister. I don't want to see you like this. You are so little and look so shabby! Get a new coat, a proper wig with curls, bands and red-heeled boots—let them be high so that

your stature may accord with your merit. You hear—now go—everything shall be provided for you.’

And with humble thanks the poor artist had to endure all this, and patiently submit to be henceforth ‘one of the household.’

But it was undoubtedly a great advantage to him as a composer to have an excellent band at his disposal to try over his orchestral compositions as he produced them. He himself says, ‘My Prince was always satisfied with my works. I not only had the encouragement of constant approval, but as conductor of an orchestra I could make experiments, observe what produced an effect, and what weakened it, and was thus in a position to improve, alter, and make additions or omissions, and be as bold as I pleased. I was cut off from the world, there was no one to confuse or torment me, and I was forced to become original.’ Here he lived a thoroughly contented life, seeing as little as possible of his wife, loved by his band and singers, and liked by his patron—as much as such an august personage could like an inferior. To us the story that Paer tells of having seen Haydn engaged, as one of the duties of his post, in standing behind the prince’s chair at dinner-time with a napkin on his arm like any of the lackeys in attendance, is not a pleasant one to think of; but probably Haydn modestly accepted things as he found them, and never dreamed that a composer might by any possibility really be a greater man than a prince!

Of Haydn's very numerous compositions, operas (now all forgotten), symphonies, masses, quartets, and concertos, which were composed in the course of these quiet years between 1762 and 1770 spent in the service of Prince Nicolaus Esterhazy, surnamed 'der Prächtige,' 'the magnificent,' from his love of pomp and the diamond-covered uniform he used to wear—I have no space to speak; a few remain and are immortal, but the greater part were merely *pièces d'occasion*, and having served their purpose are now forgotten; and yet in the 128 symphonies, which during the course of his life he composed, there are many beautiful pieces that would well repay the labour of their disinterment from the-forgotten mass among which they lie.

Every one knows the story of the 'Surprise' symphony, with the great crash, to awake the people whom the soft strains before might incline to slumber. (Haydn said, 'There all the women scream!'—a catastrophe not likely ever to happen in our day, when they are acquainted with Wagner's music.) There is another amusing story connected with the 'Farewell Symphony,' as it is called, written in 1772. It seems that the Prince Esterhazy prolonged his stay at Esterház a great deal more than was pleasing to his musicians, who were desirous of rejoining their wives and families in Vienna, so Haydn devised the ending of this symphony as a means of giving a gentle hint to his Excellency. One after the other of the musicians stopped playing, closed his book, blew out his candle, and

retired from the orchestra, until at last two only of the violins were left playing—the effect is most droll. The prince was quick enough to understand what it meant. ‘If all go,’ he said, ‘we may as well go too,’ and so Haydn got what he wanted. Many others of his compositions have had nicknames attached to them; thus one of his quartets goes by the name of the ‘Rasirmesser’ (Razor) quartet, because when Bland the English publisher was on a visit to him one morning, and Haydn was shaving, the musician, grumbling at the dulness of his razor, muttered, ‘I’d give my best quartet for a good razor;’ and Bland, rushing off to his lodgings, brought his own, and presented it to Haydn, who gave his latest quartet, for ever afterwards dubbed the ‘Razor,’ in exchange.

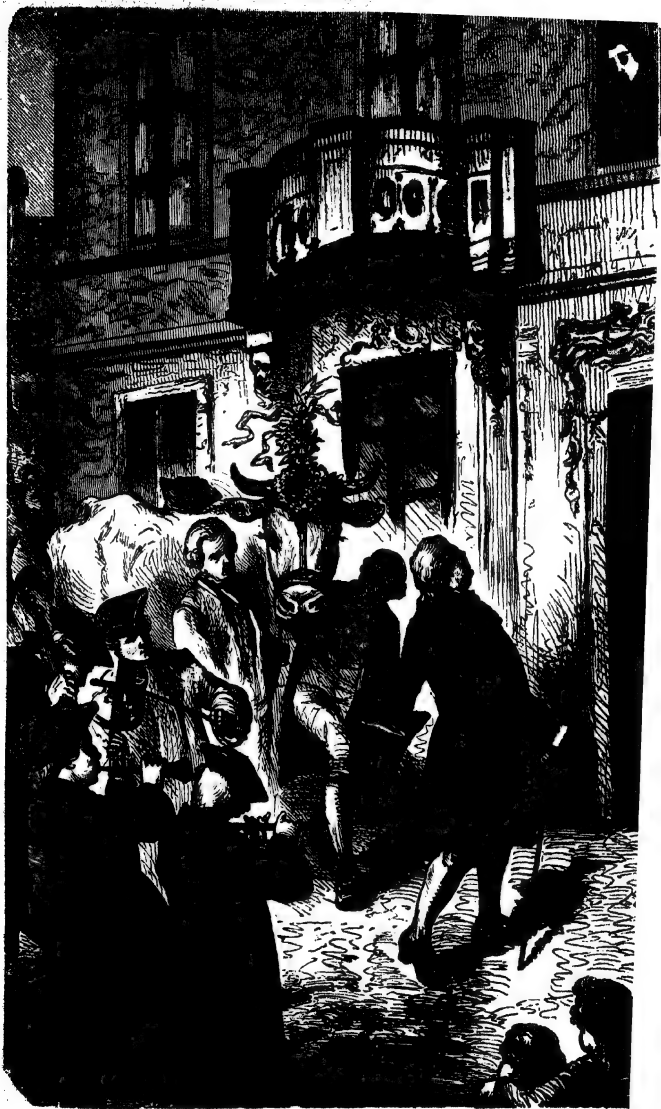
A minuet, said to be by Haydn, and called the ‘Ox Minuet,’ has a curious story connected with it, though I should hesitate to vouch for its entire authenticity. An Hungarian butcher once came to the composer when he was living at Prince Esterhazy’s castle, and besought him, of his great goodness, to write a minuet, a spick-and-span new one, that might be played for the first time at the wedding feast of the butcher’s daughter, which was to take place in a few days.

Haydn was amused as much by the oddity of the request as by the earnestness of the suppliant, and so, like ‘the good-natured fellow’ that as he himself says he always was, he promised to have the piece of music ready in a few days. Accordingly when Herr Zapolya

(for so the butcher was called) appeared again, Haydn produced the piece, played it, and then presented it to him. With profoundest bows the delighted father hurried away with his prize, in his emotion hardly able to murmur even a word of 'Thank you.' But a fortnight afterwards Haydn suddenly heard one night a strange din beneath his windows. The music was uncouth and poor enough, but as he listened he thought he could recognise in it the tune of the minuet he had composed a little while before. Looking out of the window a strange sight met his eyes: a magnificent ox decked out with flowers and leaves was being led amid the rejoicing clang of the music up to his own door, and Zapolya at the head of the procession, hat in hand, was evidently only waiting the master's appearance to make a speech.

'Perhaps you wondered, your honour,' he said, 'that I had nothing to say when you gave me the beautiful minuet; words didn't seem to come somehow then, but at the feast, when old and young were dancing away so merrily to your tune, thinks I to myself, he shall have the best ox I can find; that won't be enough for him! So your honour, I'll take it to the yard if you don't mind!' And there the ox went, and Haydn had no difficulty in disposing the next day of the animal to Prince Esterhazy for a good round sum. But the minuet will always go by the name of the 'Ox Minuet' to the end of time.

In 1785 Haydn received a commission which showed



'LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW A STRANGE SIGHT MET HIS EYES.' (P. 92.)



the wide reputation he had then gained. The Chapter of Cadiz Cathedral requested him to write some instrumental music for performance on Good Friday. 'The Seven Words of our Saviour on the Cross' was in consequence written by him.

Several invitations had been sent from England for Haydn to pay a visit there, but it was only after Prince Esterhazy was dead, that he was prevailed on by Salomon to cross the sea. A characteristic conversation between him and Mozart, which took place before he undertook this, in those days, really formidable journey, is recorded.

'Papa,' said Mozart, 'you have no training for the great world, and you speak too few languages.'

Haydn replied, '*My* language is understood by all the world.'

He set out on December 15, 1790, and did not return to Vienna till July 1792. In London, where he wrote and conducted a number of symphonies for Salomon, he was the 'lion' of the season, being in constant request for conducting concerts and paying visits to the nobility. Of these symphonies Salomon once said to him, 'I am strongly of opinion that you never will surpass this music.'

'I never mean to try,' was the answer.

But this must not be taken to mean that Haydn had given up striving after the truest perfection in his art, and it probably meant no more than that for the time he was satisfied with his work. Far more like the

genuine expression of the feeling of the great artist was his utterance, just before he died, to Kalkbrenner. 'I have only just learnt in my old age how to use the wind-instruments, and now that I do understand them I must leave the world.'

He visited Oatlands, the residence of the Duke of York, and there met the Princess of Prussia, who only a few days before had been married to the Duke. Haydn called her 'die liebe Kleine,'—she was only seventeen years old, and as he played she sat by his side, humming the airs by way of showing her satisfaction. The Prince of Wales, who was there, played the violoncello 'very well for a prince,' and all the music was of Haydn's composition. They even forced the composer to sing his own songs. Haydn visited St. Paul's Cathedral on the day when the Charity Children assembled there to sing. 'There is this note in his Diary: 'I was more touched by this innocent and reverent music than by any I ever heard in my life.' A second visit was paid to England in 1794, and more symphonies were then composed for Salomon. A 'Haydn rage' had then set in in this country; he was fêted and followed everywhere, and, as a sample of the popular feeling, a stocking-maker of Leicester sent him six pairs of cotton stockings, on which favourite themes from his music had been worked! The Prince of Wales again cultivated his acquaintance, and Haydn was often at Carlton House playing and conducting concerts. When it came to payment, however, the Prince

was not so complaisant ; and Haydn had afterwards to send to the English Parliament a bill for one hundred guineas from Vienna (a very moderate one for 26 attendances), which was at once discharged. Altogether Haydn did not do badly by these English visits ; he earned £1200, a considerable sum in those days, by the second visit. He was wont to say that it was not till he had been in England that he became famous in Germany.

Great as the work accomplished in his youth and early manhood unquestionably was, it remained for his old age to accomplish his greatest work, and that by which he is best known, the oratorio of 'The Creation.' Soon after leaving London, where the words had been given him by Salomon, Haydn set about composing the music. 'Never,' he says, 'was I so pious as when composing "The Creation." I knelt down every day and prayed God to strengthen me for my work.' It was first produced on March 31, 1799, his 67th birthday, at the National Theatre, Vienna, and was at once accorded an extraordinary share of popular favour. There is a pathetic story of the last performance of the work at which Haydn, in extreme old age, in 1808, was present, when Salieri conducted. He was carried in an arm-chair into the hall, and received there with the warmest greeting by the audience. At the sublime passage, 'And there was *light* !' Haydn, quite overcome, raised his hand, pointing upwards and saying, 'It came from thence.' Soon after this his agitation

increased so much that it was thought better to take him home at the end of the first part. The people crowded round him to take leave, and Beethoven is said to have reverently kissed his hand and forehead. After composing 'The Creation,' Haydn was prevailed upon to write another work of somewhat similar character to words adapted from Thomson's poem, and entitled 'The Seasons.' This, though containing some fine descriptive music, and several choruses of great beauty, is not at all equal to the earlier work, though at the time its success was quite as complete. But the exertion of writing two such great works, almost without rest between them, was too great, and he himself said, "'The Seasons" gave me the finishing stroke.' The bombardment of Vienna by the French in 1809 greatly disturbed the poor old man. One of the first shots fell in his garden. He still retained some of his old humour, and during the thunder of the cannons called out to his servants, 'Children, don't be frightened, no harm can happen to you while Haydn is by!' He was now no longer able to compose, and to his last unfinished quartet he added a few bars of 'Der Greis' as a conclusion :—

*Hin ist alle meine Kraft  
Alt und schwach bin ich.*

JOSEPH HAYDN.

'Gone is all my strength, old and weak am I;' and these lines he caused to be engraved, and sent on a card

to the friends who visited him. The end was indeed now near. On 26th May 1809, he had his servants gathered round him for the last adieu; then by his desire he was carried to the piano, where he played three times over the 'Emperor's Hymn,' composed by him. Then he was taken to his bed, where five days afterwards he died.

He was buried on June 15th, and the French, then in occupation of the city, showed their admiration and respect for him by the military honours which were paid at his funeral. A guard of French soldiers, besides a detachment of German troops, surrounded the pall as his body was taken to the Hundsthurm churchyard. Mozart's 'Requiem,' which has been sung over so many great men, had previously been performed in the Schottenkirche.

The coffin was in 1820 removed, by order of Prince Esterhazy, to Eisenstadt, and on its being opened for the purpose of identifying the remains, it was discovered that a shameful theft had been committed. The skull was missing, and it was afterwards ascertained that this had been removed two days after the funeral. It is now said to be in the possession of a physician at Vienna.

Haydn's personal appearance was by no means prepossessing, and in his early days he used often to go by the name of 'The Little Blackamoor.' He was short and rather stout, with regular features, but dark complexion, his face deeply pitted, like Beethoven's,

with the small-pox. His aquiline nose was in his later years very much disfigured with a polypus, which, by the way, John Hunter, the celebrated surgeon, when Haydn was in England, wanted very much to remove, but he would not undergo the operation. There was a strange mixture of the amiable and repellent in his appearance, but when one looked at his dark grey eyes, full of kindness and good-humour, one could understand why the children called him 'Papa Haydn,' and men and women loved him so much. He once said himself, 'Any one can see by the look of me that I am a good-natured sort of fellow,' and every one got on well with him and became attached to him—except his wife. He had some curious whims. One was that he found it impossible to compose except when in full dress, sitting at the piano, with a ring given to him by the King of Prussia on his finger. Then he would imagine some pleasant romance or fairy tale, and spin this out into the lively and picturesque music of a symphony or sonata. In this way many of his compositions have their secret history, 'The Love-sick Schoolmaster,' 'The Voyage,' 'The Hermit,' 'The Fair Circassian,' and the rest. But it was not merely pretty and lively music that Haydn wrote. His masses are still more frequently performed in public worship than those of any other composer, and they are all full of the truest religious feeling, and marked by the simple fervent faith that throughout his life characterised him. Zelter said that when he had heard

anything of Haydn's he always wanted to do a good action—not a bad commentary upon the life and work of this most genial and loveable of the great composers.







BORN JANUARY 27, 1756. DIED DECEMBER 5, 1791.

## MOZART.

*Oh, Mozart! immortal Mozart! how many and what  
countless images of a brighter and better world hast thou  
stamped on our souls!*

SCHUBERT.

LEOPOLD MOZART was a violinist in the band of Archbishop Sigismund, the reigning Prince of Salzburg, and it was probably in compliment to his master that he bestowed on the youngest of his seven children the name of Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Sigismundus. Born on the 27th of January 1756, this child was destined to make the name of Mozart famous wherever music is known; and surely no more beautiful life—beautiful in itself and in the works of immortal beauty which in its short course were produced—has ever been lived by any one of those to whom the crown of inspired singers, and an enduring monument in the temple of art, has been given. ‘Look around,’ was the epitaph on a great architect. ‘Listen,’ is the most fitting tribute to the wonderful genius of a Mozart.

Infant prodigies very often turn out to be nobodies in after life. But Mozart was an exception; and though he might well have been called ‘the marvellous boy,’



THE FIRST CONCERTO.

his latest works—and he died at the early age of thirty-five—were undoubtedly his grandest and most perfect. Here is a story of his childish days, as told by Herr Schachtner, the court-trumpeter at Salzburg, and through life his attached friend. ‘He was under seven years of age, but had already given public performances on the pianoforte before the Court in Vienna and other places, when on his return to Salzburg, a certain Herr Wentzl, a very good violinist, brought one evening some trios of his own composition for old Mozart to try over, and give an opinion on. The parts were then allotted thus: Wentzl, first violin, Papa Mozart playing bass on the viola, and Schachtner second violin. A present of a small fiddle had been received by Wolfgang in Vienna, but he had had no lessons on it. Notwithstanding this he begged eagerly that he might play second violin, saying, ‘any one could play that;’ and when his father told him to run away and not be troublesome, the little fellow began to cry as he obeyed, and turned slowly away. Schachtner was evidently a kind-hearted man, and he interceded for the boy, asking that he might play with him. His father at last consented, saying, ‘Play with Herr Schachtner; but so softly that no one can hear you, or else you must go away;’ and so the overjoyed little fellow took his place by his friend’s side.

Off with a flourish went the instruments together, and soon Schachtner, to his amazement, found that his companion was playing every note perfectly in time and

tune, his little head bent over his fiddle as he gravely did his work just like the rest. Schachtner says: 'I soon remarked that I was quite superfluous. I quietly laid down my violin and looked at papa, who had tears of wonder and gladness in his eyes.'

And Wolfgang began very early to compose. One of these first attempts was a concerto so difficult that no one could play it; but the child undauntedly said, 'Why, that's the very reason why it is called a concerto: people must practise it before they can play it perfectly.'

Wolfgang and his sister, Nannerl as he used to call her, had been taken by their father in 1762 to Vienna, where the children played the piano before the Empress Maria Theresa and her husband. Little Wolfgang was here, as everywhere, perfectly at his ease, with a simplicity and childish grace that won every heart. When he had been playing for some time, he jumped without ceremony on the lap of the Empress, and kissed her heartily for being so good to him. Little Marie Antoinette, her daughter, afterwards the ill-fated wife of Louis XVI., and then about the same age as Wolfgang, he treated in almost the same way. He had slipped on the polished floor, to which he was unaccustomed, and the little princess had hurried forward to raise him up, on which he promptly said, 'You are good; I will marry you.' The Empress asked why he wished this, to which he answered, 'Out of gratitude; she was kind, while her sister took no notice of me' (she had not come forward to help him). After return-

ing to Salzburg, Leopold Mozart, in the spring of 1763, took his children on a more lengthy tour to Munich, Paris, London, and the Hague, and everywhere their playing, especially Wolfgang's performances on the organ, which he had now learnt, were listened to with delight and astonishment. At Heidelberg the priest of the Church of the Holy Ghost engraved on the organ the boy's name and the date of his visit, in remembrance of 'this wonder of God,' as he called the child. At London, old Mozart says, they were received, on 27th April, by King George III. and Queen Caroline at the palace, and remained from six to nine o'clock. The King placed before the boy compositions of Bach and Handel, all of which he played at sight perfectly; he had also the honour of accompanying the Queen in a song. 'On leaving the palace,' the careful father says, 'we received a present of 24 guineas.'

On the return to Salzburg only a short stay was made there, and the father, in 1767, again took his son, now a bright healthy boy of ten years old, to Vienna. Here the Emperor Joseph II. commissioned the young musician to write an opera, and the result was 'La Finta Semplice,' a work which the genial old veteran Hasse declared was better than the operas of twenty living composers. But the petty jealousy and cabals of other musicians were so great that, although the Emperor had desired its production, this was found to be impossible, and the elder Mozart had to withdraw it. On 7th December 1768, the boy, then twelve years old,

directed with a large bâton the performance of a mass he had composed for the new church for orphans at Vienna ; and a Stabat Mater, and an operetta, ' Bastien und Bastienne,' were also written by him during the same year.

A great delight was now before him, for his father had resolved on a journey to Italy, then, far more than now, the land of music. How much this visit did for the young *maestro* it is impossible to say ; he has not, like Mendelssohn, left us an 'Italian Symphony,' recording the impressions which that sunny land of classic beauty had made upon him, but there can be little doubt of the great influence it had on the whole of his after life. There are some significant words which he wrote eight years later to his father from Paris : ' You must faithfully promise to let me *see Italy again in order to refresh my life*. I do entreat of you to confer this happiness upon me.' In Mantua, Milan, Bologna (where he had the good fortune to meet the learned Padre Martini, one of the soundest musicians of his age, and for whom he ever afterwards maintained a warm attachment), Florence, Rome, and Naples, the young genius was received everywhere with enthusiasm by the crowds who came to hear him. In Naples the superstitious people believed that there was magic in his playing, and pointed to a ring on his left hand as the cause of his wonderful dexterity, and it was only when he had taken this off, and gone on playing just the same, that they had to acknowledge it was simply the

perfection of art. At Rome, Wolfgang accomplished a wonderful feat in writing down from memory the whole of Allegri's 'Miserere,' which it was customary for the papal choir to give in the Sistine Chapel during Holy Week. His father wrote about this, 'You are aware that the far-famed "Miserere" is so highly esteemed, that the *musici* of the chapel are forbidden, on pain of excommunication, to remove any of the parts out of the chapel, or to copy them. But we have it. Wolfgang wrote it down from hearing it, and I would have enclosed it in this letter to Salzburg, had it not been necessary that we should ourselves be there too, for the manner in which it must be rendered is even more essential than the composition itself. Meanwhile we cannot intrust the mystery to others, lest we fall directly or indirectly under the censure of the Church.' The Pope gave Wolfgang the cross of the Order of the Golden Spur; and his father in another letter says, 'You may imagine how I laugh when I hear my boy called *Signor Cavaliere*.' Wolfgang also writes home,—'I had the honour of kissing St. Peter's foot in the great cathedral, but as I have the misfortune to be so short, your dear old Wolfgang Mozart had to be lifted up.' In his fifteenth year, he wrote an opera, for the Milan opera, on the subject of 'Mithradates, King of Pontus,' and this was performed under his own direction on 26th December 1770. It was gloriously successful, nearly every air being followed by the loudest applause, and shouts of 'Evviva



il Maestro ! Evviva il Maestrino !' The academies of Bologna and Verona elected the young musician one of their members. In March 1771, after enjoying the Carnival at Venice, he once more returned to his old home at Salzburg.

There is something sad in contrasting these brilliant early days with the anxious times that came later on, when the great Mozart was compelled to wait in the ante-chambers of the great, dine with their lacqueys, give lessons to stupid young countesses, and write begging letters to his friends ; yet, in reality, those later days, when 'Don Giovanni,' 'Die Zauberflöte,' and the 'Requiem,' were composed, were the truly brilliant ones. And it may be that the very greatness came, in some measure, from the sorrow and pain, that Mozart, like so many others of the world's great singers, 'learnt in suffering what he taught in song.'

After composing a comic opera in the Italian style, 'La Finta Giardiniera,' for Munich, which had a great success, young Mozart, who had been very shabbily treated by Archbishop Hieronymus—of whose spiteful conduct we shall hear more hereafter—the successor of Sigismund, determined to resign his situation in the court band, and to set out on his travels again, giving concerts from place to place, and everywhere looking out for some suitable appointment that might afford him a permanent income. This time his father was refused permission to travel, and, as on his exertions depended the support of the whole family,

he remained behind, while Frau Mozart, the mother, accompanied young Wolfgang. In 1777, now a young man of twenty-one, he set out upon his second great artistic tour, buoyant with hope, and with all the beautiful audacity of young genius determined to conquer the world. This time it was not the infant prodigy whom men listened to, but the matured musician and the composer of melodies sweeter than men had ever listened to before. But the tale is changed now. True, there are triumphs to be spoken of, flattery from the great, and presents sent in recompence for his marvellous playing (he tells one day of his chagrin in receiving from a certain prince a gold watch, instead of money that he sorely wanted—and, besides, he had five watches already!), but rebuffs, intrigues, and all sorts of petty machinations against him, make the tale a sadder one—and so it continued to be to the end.

From Munich—where it had been hoped that the Elector would have given him an appointment at court, but he was only told to go to Italy and become famous, ‘it was too early yet to think about becoming a Capellmeister,’—he went to Augsburg, spending some pleasant days there in the society of a cousin, Marianne, nicknamed by him Bäsle, a merry open-hearted girl of nineteen. From this place Wolfgang writes to his father:—‘The 17th.—I now write early in the morning to say that my cousin is pretty, intelligent, loveable, clever, and gay—probably because she has lived so

much in society ; she was also some time at Munich. We do indeed exactly suit each other, for she too is rather inclined to be satirical, so we banter our friends most merrily together. A certain Father Emilion, a conceited jack-ass and a sorry nothing, was very sweet on my cousin, and wished to have his jest with her, but she made a jest of him. At last, when rather tipsy (which soon occurred), he began to talk about music, and sang a canon, saying, " I never in my life heard anything finer." I said, " I regret that I can't sing it with you, for nature has not given me power of song." " No matter," said he. So we began. I made the third, but I sang different words, thus—" Pater Emilion, oh, thou numbskull !" *sotto voce* to my cousin ; then we laughed on for at least half-an-hour.' Not very brilliant this, perhaps, but does it not vividly show the man overbrimming with merriment and enjoyment of the moving life about him, ready enough to laugh, but with a humour that was always good humour?

Thence he went on to Mannheim, a town that is memorable as the place where he first met the Webers, and made the acquaintance of Herr Cannabich, the director of the music at the Elector's court, and one who proved a staunch friend through everything to the young composer. Cannabich had a daughter named Rosa, a girl of thirteen, exceedingly pretty and clever, and Wolfgang appears to have admired her very much, and perhaps for a time to have flirted and been in love with her. He wrote her a sonata, and was delighted

with the way in which she played it ;—the *andante*, he said, he had composed to represent her, and when it was finished he vowed she was just what the *andante* was. But this little love affair, if it existed, soon was forgotten in a more serious one with Aloysia Weber. Her father was a theatre copyist in poor circumstances. There were a number of children, and she was a beautiful girl of fifteen, with a magnificent voice. She was cousin, by the way, to Weber, afterwards composer of the ‘Freischütz.’ Mozart was so charmed with her voice that he undertook to give her lessons, and we soon hear of him composing airs for her, and meditating a concert tour in Italy in company with her, and her father and sister. In writing of it to his own father he sets out the advantages to be gained by co-partnership, and very prosaically says, ‘Should we stay long anywhere, the eldest daughter (Josepha, afterwards Frau Hofer, for whom Mozart wrote the part of Astrafiammente in the “Zauberflöte”) would be of the greatest use to us, for we could have our own *ménage*, as she understands cooking.’ But papa Mozart decidedly objected. ‘Your proposal to travel about with Herr Weber—N.B., two daughters—has driven me nearly wild,’ and he straightway orders his son off to Paris, whither, with a parting present of a pair of mittens knitted for him by Mdlle. Weber, he reluctantly sets out in company with his mother.

His stay in Paris during the next year was not very eventful, and a symphony produced at the *Concerts*

*Spirituals* seems to have been his most successful work at this time. It was clever and lively, full of striking effects, and was most warmly applauded. He says, 'The moment the symphony was over I went off in my joy to the Palais Royal where I took a good ice, told my beads, as I had vowed, and went home, where I am happiest, and always shall be happiest.' A great sorrow came to him here in the death of his mother. Owing to the great expense of living in Paris they had been compelled to live together in a small, dark room, so cramped for space that there was not even room for the indispensable piano. Here she was taken ill, and though for fourteen days Wolfgang most devotedly attended to her wants, she died in his arms. The letters in which he breaks the news to his father and sister are full of the most beautiful tenderness and forgetfulness of his own grief in solicitude for theirs. Things did not indeed prosper with him in Paris; he tried to give lessons, but the ladies whom he taught paid him very shabbily, and the labour of going from one part of the city to another to teach was so great that he found it difficult to give the time he wished to composition. Here is a specimen of the way in which he was sometimes received, as told by himself. He had taken a letter of introduction from M. Grimm to the Duchesse de Chabot:—'I waited half an hour in a large room without any fire, and as cold as ice. At last the duchess came in, and was very polite, begging me to make allowance for her piano, as none of her

instruments were in good order, but I might at least try it. I said I would most gladly play something, but at this moment it was impossible, as my fingers were quite benumbed from the cold, so I asked her, at all events, to take me to a room where there was a fire. "Oh, oui, Monsieur, vous avez raison!" was her answer. She then seated herself, and drew for a whole hour in company with several gentlemen all sitting in a circle round a large table, and during this time I had the honour to wait. The windows and doors were open, so that not only my hands but my body and my feet were cold, and my head also began to ache. Moreover, there was *altum silentium*, and I really did not know what to do from cold, headache, and weariness. I again and again thought to myself that if it were not on M. Grimm's account I would leave the house at once. At last, to cut matters short, I played on the wretched, miserable piano. What, however, vexed me most of all was that the duchess and all the gentlemen did not cease drawing for a single moment; so I was left to play to the chairs, and tables, and the walls. My patience gave way under such unpropitious circumstances. I therefore began the Fischer variations, and after playing one half of them I rose. Then came eulogiums without end. I, however, said all that could be said, which was that I could do myself no justice on such a piano, but I should be very glad to fix some other day to play when a better instrument might be found. But the duchess would not hear of

my going away, so I was obliged to wait till her husband came in, who placed himself beside me and listened with great attention, while as for me I became unconscious of all cold and all headache, and in spite of the wretched piano played as I *can* play when I am in the right mood. Give me the best piano in Europe, and listeners who understand nothing, or don't wish to understand, or who do not sympathise with me in what I am playing,—I no longer feel any pleasure.'

Music in Paris just then was at a low ebb. Vapidly pretty Italian operas were in fashion, and Piccinni was the favourite composer. It was some years afterwards that the great contests between the Piccinnists and Gluckists culminated in the victory of the latter, though 'Alceste' had already been produced, and 'Iphigenia' was soon to follow. Mozart was a fervent admirer of Gluck, and the music of the older master had evidently an important influence on that of the younger and more gifted composer.

Once more his thoughts were turned to Salzburg, for two of the leading musicians there having died, the Archbishop Hieronymus offered their posts to the Mozarts, father and son, at a salary of 1000 florins for the two. The father anxiously entreated his son to return and accept this offer, mentioning as a further bait, that Aloysia Weber would probably be engaged to sing in Salzburg. Much as Wolfgang hated Salzburg, or rather the people living there, his love for his father

and sister prevailed over his aversion ; and though with no pleasure at all in the prospect of seeing the hateful Archbishop again, he set out from Paris, travelling to Salzburg in very leisurely fashion *via* Strasburg, Mannheim, and Munich. At Strasburg he was induced to give several concerts, but they were not pecuniary successes, and he did not make by any one more than three louis d'or. But how the artist peeps out in every line of the letters in which he describes these ! After saying how few were present, and how cold it was, he proceeds :—‘ But I soon warmed myself, to show the Strasburg gentlemen how little I cared, and played to them a long time for my own amusement, giving a concerto more than I had promised, and at the close extemporising. It’s now over, but at all events I gained honour and fame.’

At Munich a great shock awaited him. He visited the Webers, and being in mourning for his mother, wore, after the French fashion, a red coat with black buttons. When he appeared, Aloysia hardly seemed to recognise him, and her coldness was so marked, that Mozart quietly seated himself at the piano, and sang in a loud voice, ‘ *Ich lass das Mädchen gern das mich nicht will* ’ (I gladly give up the girl who slights me). It was all over, and he had to bear the loss of the fickle girl as best he might. There is a significant line in one of his letters at this time to his father :—‘ In my whole life I never wrote worse than to-day, but I really am unfit for anything ; *my heart is so full of tears.*’



After two years' absence he returned home to Salzburg, where he was warmly welcomed back. Here he remained for a little while, and wrote his first serious opera, 'Idomeneo,' to the text of an Abbé Varesco, a Salzburger. This opera Beethoven thought the finest of all that Mozart wrote. It was brought out at Munich in January 1781, and was brilliantly successful. In the March following, an order was received from the Archbishop to follow him to Vienna, where he wished to appear with all the full pomp and brilliant retinue of a Prince of the Church, and as one of this retinue Mozart had to follow him, little thinking at the time that he should never return to Salzburg, but that Vienna henceforth was to be his home.

In Vienna he found that he had to live in the Archbishop's house, and was looked upon there as one of the ordinary servants. He says, 'We dine at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, unluckily rather too early an hour for me. Our party<sup>etc.</sup> consists of the two valets, the comptroller, Herr Zetti, the confectioner, the two cooks, Cecarelli, Brunetti (two singers), and my insignificant self. *N.B.*—The two valets sit at the head of the table. I have, at all events, the honour to be placed above the cooks; I almost believe I am back in Salzburg!'

Mozart was a true gentleman, with no foolish false pride, but with the honourable self-respect that every gentleman must possess, and it was very galling to him to have to suffer such odious treatment from the mean-

spirited Archbishop. Indeed it was only for his father's sake that he submitted to the continued contumely and petty slights to which the Archbishop delighted in subjecting him. At last the open rupture came. The Archbishop called him a knave and dissolute fellow, and told him to be off; and when Mozart waited upon Count Arco, the principal official, to obtain the regular dismissal that was necessary, the fellow poured abuse upon him, and actually *kicked him out of the room*. Poor Mozart was in a state of violent excitement after this outrage, and for some days was so ill that he could not continue his ordinary work. But now at least he was free, and though his father, like a timid prudent old man, bewailed the loss of the stipend which his son had been receiving, Mozart himself knew that the release was most certainly for the best.

In 1782 appeared 'Die Entführung aus dem Serail,' his first really important opera, full of beautiful airs, which at once became enormously popular with the Viennese. The Emperor Joseph II. knew very little about music, but, as frequently happens in such cases, considered that he possessed prodigious taste. On hearing it he said, 'Much too fine for our ears, dear Mozart; and what a quantity of notes!'

The bold reply to this was, 'Just as many notes as are necessary, your Majesty.'

Much of the delight which Mozart felt in the success of the opera arose from the fact that it enabled him seriously to contemplate marriage. Aloysia Weber had

been faithless to him, but there was another sister—with no special beauty save that of bright eyes, a comely figure, and a cheerful, amiable disposition—Constanze, whom he now hoped to make his wife. His father objected to all the Weber family, and there was some difficulty in obtaining the paternal consent, but at last the marriage took place on 4th August 1782. How truly he loved his wife from first to last his letters abundantly show; her frequent illnesses were afterwards a great and almost constant source of expense to him, but he never ceased to write to her with the passionate ardour of a young lover. He says:—‘I found that I never prayed so fervently, or confessed so piously, as by her side. She felt the same.’ And now for some time everything went smoothly in the modest little *ménage* in Vienna. Mozart had plenty of lessons to give, but no commissions for operas as he would have wished. There is a characteristic story of this period. A pretty young lady violinist, Signora Regina Strinasacchi, was engaged to play a B-flat sonata by Mozart at the imperial palace. On the day of performance the violin part was written out, but not that for the piano. Gravely Mozart went to the piano with a blank sheet of paper, which he placed before him, and then the concerto proceeded, and was played with all possible finish by the two performers. But the Emperor Joseph in his box close by had perceived, with the aid of his lorgnette, that there were no notes on Mozart’s paper. At the conclusion he sent for him and asked an explana-

tion, when, this time possibly with some slight compunction, Mozart said, 'May it please your Majesty, there was not a note lost!'

The six quartets composed about this time, and dedicated to Haydn, ought to be mentioned, if only for the reverent and affectionate words in which the dedication to the elder musician is couched. Mozart once said to a conceited Bohemian composer, named Koze-luch, who had been criticising 'Papa Haydn,'—'Sir, if you and I were melted into one, we should be a long way from making a Haydn.' And the regard was not all on one side; for after listening to a performance of these same quartets one day, Haydn said in his own simple unaffected way to Mozart's father, 'I declare to you on my honour, that I consider your son the greatest composer I have ever heard; he has taste, and possesses the most consummate knowledge of the art of composition.' And some years afterwards Haydn said, 'It enrages me to think that the unparalleled Mozart is not engaged by some imperial or royal court. Forgive my excitement, but I love the man so dearly.'

In 1786, the comic opera, 'The Marriage of Figaro,' composed to a text by the imperial theatrical poet Signor da Ponte, was produced. Like the words of most of Mozart's operas, the play itself is weak and somewhat tedious, but the music is so marvellously fresh, spontaneous, and sparkling in its flow, that it will always remain a favourite with those who enjoy good operatic music. This work was received at Prague with even

more enthusiasm than at Vienna ; Mozart paid a visit there, and was so delighted with his reception that he wrote another opera, the famous 'Don Giovanni,' especially for his Prague friends. Of this he said, 'These good people have avenged me. They know how to do me justice. I must write something to please them.' And of 'Don Giovanni' again he says, 'It was not intended for Vienna but for Prague. The truth, however, is that I wrote it for myself and a few friends,'—and the last statement is probably the nearest the truth. The greatest part of this, in many respects his finest work, was composed at the country-house of his friend Duschek, near Prague. The room which he occupied there and the stone table at which he wrote the score while in his friend's company, or in the midst of a game of skittles, of which he was always very fond, are still shown. There is a story of the composition of the magnificent overture to the opera, which, if told of any one but Mozart, it would be difficult to believe. He was always rather procrastinating, and the night before the public performance not a note of the overture had been put on paper ; but then he set to work in earnest. His wife supplied him with draughts of his favourite punch, and to keep him awake told him fairy tales. Hour after hour he toiled without intermission, and by seven o'clock in the morning the entire overture was in the hands of the copyists, and the same evening it was performed. He took the utmost pains with the rehearsals, in some

cases teaching the performers their parts in a rather original manner. Thus, he had great difficulty with the lady who acted Zerlina, for she would not shriek out loud enough in the scene where the Don carries her off. This scene had been rehearsed again and again, and still the composer was not satisfied. At last he went himself upon the stage, and when the time came clutched her so fiercely by the arm that she screamed out in real terror. 'Now that's right at last,' he said, laughing, 'that's the way you must learn!' He also taught Don Giovanni to dance the minuet, as the barytone was not acquainted with the steps. The first performance of this marvellous work was on October 29th, 1787, and it was splendidly performed and received. Strange to say, when afterwards produced in Vienna it was not so successful; people found fault with it for the simple reason that most of its greatest beauties were not perceived by their dull ears. 'All the world,' said the shallow-pated court-poet Da Ponte, 'except Mozart himself, were of opinion that the piece must be *remodelled*!'

It is difficult now to realise the fact that Mozart's operas were at first so little appreciated in Vienna. Salieri's 'Assur' completely eclipsed for the time the immortal 'Don Giovanni,' and the Emperor Leopold, who never really cared for Mozart's music, gave all his favours to Italians, such as Cimarosa, whose 'Matrimonio Segreto' on its first representation he encored in its entirety, besides bestowing upon the composer

honours and presents of the greatest worth. But who ever hears of Salieri and Cimarosa now—except in connection with the lives of Mozart, Schubert, or others whom they probably in their day decidedly looked down upon? Of a certainty the race of fame is not always to the swift—to make money!

Passing over a visit to Leipzig—where he studied with the keenest delight a number of the unpublished works of the great Sebastian Bach—and to Berlin, he returned to Vienna, and at once set to work upon some quartets which the King of Prussia had ordered from him. ‘*Così fan tutte*,’ a comic opera, with the beautifully flowing music that only Mozart could write, but with a stupid plot that has prevented its frequent repetition in later times; and the glorious ‘*Zauberflöte*,’ written to assist a theatrical manager, Schikaneder, were his next works. At this time a strange melancholy began to show itself in his letters—it may be that already his overwrought brain was conscious that the end was not far distant. Such lines as these, pathetic and sad in their simple almost childlike expression, occur in a letter he wrote during a short absence from his wife at Frankfort in 1790:—‘I am as happy as a child at the thought of returning to you. If people could see into my heart I should almost feel ashamed—all there is cold, cold as ice. Were you with me, I should possibly take more pleasure in the kindness of those I meet here, but all seems to me so empty.’ On his return to Vienna pecuniary want was

rather pressingly felt; his silver plate had to be pawned, and a perfidious friend, Stadler, made away with the tickets, and the silver was never redeemed. On one occasion Joseph Deiner, the landlord of the 'Silberne Schlange,' chanced to call upon him, and was surprised to find Mozart and his wife Constanze dancing round the room. The laughing explanation was that they had no firewood in the house, and so were trying to warm themselves with dancing. Deiner at once offered to send in firewood, Mozart promising to pay—as soon as he could.

That grand work, the 'Zauberflöte,' had just been completed when a strange commission was given him. One day a tall haggard-looking man, dressed in grey, with a very sombre expression of countenance, called upon Mozart, bringing with him an anonymous letter. This letter contained an inquiry as to the sum for which he would write a mass for the dead, and in how short a time this could be completed. Mozart consulted his wife, and the sum of fifty ducats was mentioned. The stranger departed, and soon returned with the money, promising Mozart a further sum on completion, and also mentioned that he might as well spare the trouble of finding out who had given this commission, for it would be entirely useless. We now know that the commission had really been given by Count Walsegg, a foolish nobleman, whose wife had died, and who wanted, by transcribing Mozart's score, to pass it off as his own composition—and this he



actually did after the composer's death. Poor Mozart, in the weak state of health in which he now was, with nerves unstrung and over-excited brain, was strangely impressed by this visit, and soon the fancy took firm possession of him that the messenger had arrived with a mandate from the unseen world, and that the 'Requiem' he was to write was for himself! Not the less did he ardently set to work on it. Hardly, however, was it commenced than he was compelled to write another opera, 'La Clemenza di Tito,' for which a commission had been given him by the Bohemian Estates, for production on the occasion of the Emperor Leopold's coronation in their capital. This was accomplished in the short space of eighteen days, and though it does not contain his best music, yet the overture and several of the numbers are full of a piquant beauty and liveliness well suiting the festival of a people's rejoicing. But a far greater work, the 'Zauberflöte,' was produced in Vienna shortly afterwards. It did not take very well at first, but subsequent performances went better. Schikaneder, the manager, acted as Papageno, and Mozart tells the following story in a letter to his wife:—'I went behind the scenes when Papageno's air accompanied by the bells began, feeling such a strong impulse to play the bells myself for once. I played them a capital trick, for at Schikaneder's pause I made an arpeggio; he started, looked behind the scenes, and saw me. The second time the pause came I did nothing, when he paused and would not

proceed. I guessed his thoughts and played a chord. He then struck the bell and said "*Halt's Maul*" (hold your tongue), which made everybody laugh. I believe it was owing to this joke that many learned for the first time that Schikaneder did not himself play the instrument.'

But even the 'Zauberflöte' was in advance of the musical ideas of the time, and, when produced ten years after Mozart's death, in Paris, a certain pseudo-musician, named Lachnith, considered it necessary to take it in hand and remodel it under the name of 'Les Mystères d'Isis.' Pieces from 'Le Nozze,' 'Don Giovanni,' and even Haydn's symphonies, were uncereemoniously incorporated in it. There is a ridiculous story of this Lachnith being affected to tears one evening by the sublimity of his (?) music, and exclaiming—'No, I will compose no more! I could never go beyond this!'

His labours in bringing out the 'Zauberflöte' over, Mozart returned to the 'Requiem' he had already commenced, but, while writing, he often had to sink back in his chair, being seized with short swoons. Too plainly was his strength exhausted, but he persisted in his solemn work. One bright November morning he was walking with Constanze in the Prater, and sadly pointing out to her the falling leaves, and speaking of death, with tears in his eyes he added, 'I well know I am writing this "Requiem" for myself. My own feelings tell me that I shall not last long. No doubt some one has

given me poison—I cannot get rid of this thought.' With these gloomy fancies haunting his mind, he rapidly grew worse, and soon could not leave his room. The performances of the 'Zauberflöte' were still going on, and extraordinarily successful. He took the greatest interest in hearing of them, and at night would take out his watch and note the time, 'Now the first act is over, now is the time for the great Queen of Night.' The day before his death he said to his wife, 'Oh that I could only once more hear my "Flauto Magico,"' humming, in scarcely audible voice, the lively Bird-catcher song. The same day, at two o'clock in the afternoon, he called his friends together, and asked for the score of his nearly completed 'Requiem' to be laid on his bed. Benedict Schack sang the soprano, his brother-in-law, Hofer, the tenor; Gerl, the bass; and Mozart himself took the alto in a weak but delicately clear voice. They had got through the various parts till they came to the 'Lacrymosa,' when Mozart burst into tears, and laid the score aside. The next day (Sunday) he was worse, and said to Sophie, his sister-in-law—'I have the taste of death on my tongue, I smell the grave, and who can comfort my Constanze, if you don't stay here?' In her account of his last moments, she says,—'I found Süßmayer sitting by Mozart's bed. The well-known "Requiem" was lying on the coverlet, and Mozart was explaining to Süßmayer the mode in which he wished him to complete it after his death. He further requested his wife

to keep his death secret until she had informed Albrechtsberger of it, "for the situation of assistant-organist at the Stephen Church ought to be his before God and the world." The doctor came and ordered cold applications on Mozart's burning head. . . . The last movement of his lips was an endeavour to indicate where the kettledrums should be used in the Requiem. I think I still hear the sound.'

On a cold and stormy December day his body was taken to the Church of St. Stephen, and, amid a violent shower of snow and rain, was carried thence to the churchyard of St. Marx. His friends, who had followed the coffin part of the way, did not battle against the storm to the end, and so it fell out that not a single friend of his stood by his side when the coffin was lowered into the grave. And, by a strange mischance, arising from a change in the person who held the office of sexton, when Constanze afterwards inquired as to the position of the grave, for the purpose of erecting a cross there, no information could be given, and to this day the spot has never been discovered. But, little matter!—his resting-place may be forgotten, but his memory still remains, and, so long as men continue to cherish and venerate the pure and beautiful in art and in human life, so long will Mozart, the great master of melody, be remembered and loved by them.

Mozart, like many other little men, never liked the

shortness of his stature to be alluded to. His face was pale, his hair was very silky and long, and his eyes, though in ordinary life with a languid restless look in them, were wonderfully bright and expressive. He was exceedingly fond of active life, an enthusiast in dancing, and an adept in billiards and skittles, his love of which I have already mentioned. Indeed, in the life of intense hard work that was his, we can well understand how necessary to him (as afterwards to Mendelssohn) were these short intervals of complete relaxation. But the true Mozart was only to be seen in the orchestra or at the piano. Then his whole aspect was changed; as a spectator at the rehearsal of 'Le Nozze de Figaro' has said,—'I shall never forget his little animated countenance when lighted up with the glorious rays of genius—it is as impossible to describe it as it would be to paint sunbeams!'





BORN DECEMBER 17, 1770. DIED MARCH 26, 1827.

## BEETHOVEN.

*I will grasp Fate by the throat ; it shall not utterly crush me.  
Oh it is so glorious to live one's life a thousand times !*

LETTER TO WEGELER.

IN one of his letters to Frau von Streicher at Baden, Beethoven writes: 'When you visit the ancient ruins do not forget that Beethoven has often lingered there; when you stray through the silent pine-forests do not forget that Beethoven often wrote poetry there, or, as it is termed, composed.' He was always fond of claiming the title '*Ton-dichter*, poet in music;' and surely of all the great geniuses who have walked the earth, to none can the glorious name of 'poet' more truly be given than to Ludwig van Beethoven.

He was born at Bonn on 17th December 1770. His father, Johann van Beethoven, was a tenor singer in the Electoral Chapel of the Archbishop of Cologne at Bonn, and his mother Maria Magdalena was a daughter of the head cook at the castle of Ehrenbreitstein. The Beethoven family originally came from Louvain in Belgium, but the composer's grandfather had settled in Bonn, first as a singer and afterwards as Capellmeister



to the Court. Musicians were not held of much account in those days, and the marriage of a singer with the daughter of a cook was not at all considered a *mésalliance*. Johann was a sad drunken scapegrace, and his poor wife, in bringing up her family upon the small portion of his earnings which she could save from being squandered at the tavern, had a pitiable hard and long struggling life of it.

Johann soon discovered the extraordinary musical endowments of his child and at once set to work to make a 'prodigy' of him, as Handel, Bach and Mozart had been before, for in this way the father hoped to secure a mine of wealth and lazy competence for himself. So the boy, when only a few years old, was kept for long weary hours practising the piano, and one of the earliest stories of his life is of the five-year-old little child made to stand on a bench before the piano labouring over the notes, while the tears flowed fast down his cheeks in the cold and aching pain, from which his hard taskmaster would not release him. Besides his father, a clever musician who lodged in the house, Pfeiffer, an oboist at the theatre, gave him lessons. Beethoven used afterwards to say that he had learnt more from this Pfeiffer than from any one else, but he was too ready to abet the father in his tyranny, and many a time when the two came reeling home late at night from their drinking bouts at the tavern, they would arouse the little fellow from his sleep and set him to work at the piano till daybreak.

His next instructor was Neefe, the organist of the archbishop's private chapel, a really skilful and learned musician, who predicted that the boy would become a second Mozart. Under him Beethoven studied for several years, and in 1782 when he was hardly twelve years old, we find him acting as organist in Neefe's place during the absence of the latter on a journey. The next year three sonatas composed by young Beethoven, and dedicated to the Elector in fulsome language, which was probably his father's production, were printed. Soon afterwards the boy obtained the appointment of assistant organist to the Elector with a salary of a hundred thalers, no inconsiderable addition to the resources of his poor mother, who, with her family of three children, Ludwig, Carl and Johann, and the more and more frequent visits of her ne'er-do-well of a husband to the tavern, was often grievously hard put to it for money. Young Ludwig had little play-time in his life, and little opportunity for education, but amid his hard work some indications of a mischievous boyish spirit are to be found. Thus, during Passion week it was the custom to sing the Lamentations in phrases of a few lines each, and in the middle of each phrase was a pause which the accompanist used to fill up with a short interlude on the piano—the organ not being used during that week. Now there happened to be in the choir a certain Heller, a good but rather conceited musician, and he boasted that nothing could throw him out of his part. Young

Beethoven then undertook to do this, promising to use only legitimate means, and Heller was so confident that he took a bet on the subject. In the service the next day when one of these pauses occurred, Beethoven began to modulate, contriving to get into a key very remote from the original one, and though with his little finger he repeatedly struck the original key-note while continuing the modulation, poor Heller completely stuck fast and had to give up. After the service he rushed away in a great rage to complain to the Elector, Max Franz, who, however, rather enjoyed the joke and contented himself with advising the young accompanist not to attempt such ambitious variations in future.

Next comes a visit to Vienna in 1787, fated to be a short one, and only remarkable for the meeting that then took place between Mozart and Beethoven. The boy obtained an interview with the great *maestro*, and was allowed to play before him. Poor Beethoven's touch from his constant organ-playing may have been rather heavy, and Mozart, treating the piece he played as a mere show-piece, praised it but coldly. Beethoven noticed this, and was at once put on his mettle. He asked Mozart to give him a theme to improvise on; and, this being done, he played in such marvellous style, pouring out the most ingenious and fancifully beautiful variations, that Mozart, stepping softly into the next room, said to his friends there, 'Look after him, this boy will some day make a great name in the

world!' But the young musician was compelled by the news of his mother's illness soon to hasten back to Bonn, and she died very shortly after his return. Of her Beethoven writes to his friend Dr. Schaden:

She was indeed a kind mother to me, and my best friend. Ah! who was happier than I when I could still utter the sweet name of mother, and it was heard? To whom can I now say it? Only to the silent form which my imagination pictures to me.' Ludwig had now to face the world alone at the age of seventeen. His father was a hopeless sot, and he had two orphan brothers to care for. For nearly five years he remained in Bonn, playing the violin in the Elector's orchestra, and eking out a living by giving lessons. But he was a most unmethodical teacher, and detested the occupation. About this time he made the acquaintance, by means of pianoforte lessons he was engaged to give to her youngest son, of a Frau von Breuning, a good, motherly woman, who appreciated his genius, cared for and helped him. As Beethoven used regretfully to say of her in after days, she knew how 'to keep the insects from the blossoms,' and by her gentle advice and kindly praise encouraged him in his daily toil. But she could *not* get him to give lessons regularly, and sometimes, even though she prevailed upon him to go to the pupil's house, she found out afterwards that he had merely left a message,—he 'could not give his lesson at that time—he would give two the next day instead.' When she used to hear of this, her favourite

expression was, 'Oh, Beethoven is in a *raptus* again!' and he was rather fond in after life of quoting this phrase of his old friend's. The society of her sons and daughters was also decidedly beneficial to the young musician. Nothing is so useful to the man of imperfect education as the society of cultivated men and women—that is, if, as is not always the case, he is conscious of his inferiority, and seeks to gain profit by intercourse with the better informed. It was at this time that he learned to love the old classics, the well-worn volumes of Homer and Plutarch being his especial favourites. French and Italian he also partially mastered, and he studied the poetry of his own country with keen delight,—Klopstock, and subsequently Goethe, being pored over again and again.

In the year 1791, the Elector, as head of the Teutonic Order, had to be present at a grand conclave at Mergentheim, and thither he resolved to take his musical and theatrical staff. Two ships were chartered to convey these gentlemen down the Rhine and Main, and a very pleasant excursion, with all sorts of frolics and high revellings, they had of it. Lux, a celebrated actor, was chosen king of the expedition, and we find Beethoven figuring among the scullions. At Aschaffenburg an incident occurred worthy of note. A visit was paid by the musicians in a body to the Abbé Sterkel, then accounted one of the best pianists of the time. On being requested to play, he sat down to the piano and played a sonata of his own with great refine

ment and delicacy of touch. While he was playing, Beethoven sat in a corner listening with the greatest attention. I have said his own style, from long organ-playing, was rather rough and heavy, and this smooth and graceful style was a new revelation to him. When asked in his turn to play, he for some time obstinately refused, until at last the abbé, either intentionally to provoke him into playing or seriously, referred to twenty-four variations he had published on a theme of Righini's 'Venni Amore,' and said he did not believe the composer himself could play them. This roused Beethoven; he went to the piano and played not only those variations, but also a number of others far more complicated, and all in precisely the same smoothly flowing and elegant style as that of Sterkel!

In the autumn of the year following a visit was paid by Haydn to Bonn on his return from his second journey to London. The musicians of the town gave a breakfast at Godesberg in his honour, and here Beethoven summoned up courage to show the veteran musician a cantata which he had recently composed. This was warmly praised by Haydn, and probably about this time arrangements were made for Beethoven to be received as a pupil by the older master. In the beginning of November 1792 the young musician left Bonn for Vienna, and, as it happened, he never afterwards returned to the familiar scenes of his birthplace.

Beethoven was never a very easy man to get on with, and his intercourse with Haydn, who used to call him

the 'Great Mogul,' does not seem to have been the most friendly. He was dissatisfied with the instruction given him, and suspicions were awakened in his mind that the elder musician was jealous of him, and did not wish him to improve. These thoughts were strengthened by the result of a chance meeting one day, as he was walking home with his portfolio under his arm, with Johann Schenk, a scientific and thoroughly accomplished musician. Beethoven complained to him of the little advance he was making in counterpoint, and that Haydn never corrected his exercises or taught him anything. Schenk asked to look through the portfolio, and see the last work that Haydn had revised, and on examining it he was astonished to find a number of mistakes that had not been pointed out. It is difficult to understand Haydn's conduct in this matter, for the perfidious treatment suspected by Beethoven is quite at variance with the ordinarily accepted character of the old man, and I cannot help fancying that the only foundation for Beethoven's suspicion was that Haydn did not quite understand the erratic genius of the youth till some time afterwards. Beethoven dedicated his three pianoforte sonatas, Op. II., to Haydn, and when the latter suggested that he should add on the title-page 'Pupil of Haydn,' the 'Great Mogul' refused, bluntly saying 'that he had never learnt anything from him.' After Haydn, Albrechtsberger and Salieri were for a time his teachers, but Beethoven got on no better with them, and Albrechtsberger said,

‘Have nothing to do with him; he has learnt nothing, and will never do anything in decent style.’ Perhaps not in your pedant’s style, O great contrapuntist!

Beethoven cannot be said to have been unfortunate in his friends. He had many true and faithful ones throughout his life, and though he suffered from pecuniary troubles, caused by the conduct of his brothers, he was never in such a state of grinding poverty as some other artists, such as Schubert, have been,—never compelled to waste precious years of his life in producing ‘pot-boilers’—working not for art so much as for mere food and shelter. In 1794 Prince Karl Lichnowski, who had been a pupil of Mozart, and who as well as his wife Christiane, was *fanatico per la musica*, proposed that Beethoven should come and live at his palace. They had no children; a suite of rooms was placed at the musician’s disposal, no terms were proposed, the offer was the most delicate and friendly imaginable, and was accepted by Beethoven in the spirit in which it was made. For ten years he resided with the Lichnowskis, and these were probably the years of purest happiness in the great composer’s life, although early in their course the terrible affliction of deafness began to be felt by him. He at this time freely frequented the salons of the Viennese nobility, many of whom were accomplished *virtuosi* themselves, and were able to appreciate the great genius of the new comer, rough and bearish as oftentimes he



must have appeared to them—a great contrast to the courtly Haydn and Salieri, who might be seen sitting side by side on the sofa in some grandee's music-room, with their swords, wigs, ruffles, silk stockings, and snuff-boxes, while the insignificant-looking and meanly dressed Beethoven used to stand unnoticed in a corner. Here is a description of his appearance given by a Frau von Bernhard :—‘ When he visited us, he generally put his head in at the door before entering, to see if there were any one present he did not like. He was short and insignificant-looking, with a red face covered with pock-marks. His hair was quite dark. His dress was very common, quite a contrast to the elegant attire customary in those days, especially in our circles. . . . He was very proud; and I have known him refuse to play, even when Countess Thun, the mother of Princess Lichnowski, had fallen on her knees before him as he lay on the sofa to beg him to. The Countess was a very eccentric person. . . . At the Lichnowskis’ I saw Haydn and Salieri, who were then very famous, while Beethoven excited no interest.’

It must be confessed that Beethoven was sometimes dreadfully rude to other artists. Once when Himmel was concluding a long and elaborate improvisation, Beethoven asked him ‘when he was going to begin.’ And on another occasion, after a quintet of Steibelt had been played (and Beethoven was very enraged with that musician for his haughtiness), Beethoven seized hold of the ‘cello part, turned it upside down, and on

this extraordinary theme played such a magnificent improvisation that the long quintet was forgotten.

Paer the composer tells a good story of Beethoven having accompanied him to the theatre to hear a new opera that Paer had written,—‘Achille.’

‘Very pretty indeed,’ said Beethoven, as the piece went on.

‘Most interesting!’ he remarked again, his gratified companion all the time attributing these remarks to the effect of the music.

‘Really I must put this piece to music myself!’ was Beethoven’s next remark, sadly disconcerting the poor uncomplimented composer by his side.

Bettina (Goethe’s Bettina) says in a rapturous account of a visit which, bursting without ceremony one day into his den at Vienna, she paid to him,—‘Great as are his heart and mind, he is in person small, with a brown-complexioned face, covered with pock-marks—what would be called ugly;—but he has an angelic brow, arched by such noble lines of harmony that one marvels at it as at a glorious work of art. He has black and very long hair, which he tosses back. Owing to his friends and brothers consuming his substance, his attic is poor, but his tattered appearance is grand and imposing. He is also deaf, and can scarcely see.’ His hands are described as being covered with hair, and the fingers very broad, especially at the tips. As a performer he must at this time have been at his best, and probably no such marvellous improvisations have

before or since been heard as those in which, when in the vein, and among his friends, Beethoven would indulge. A wonderful feat is told as having happened at a concert for the widows and orphans of musicians at Vienna in 1795. Beethoven had commenced to write a concerto in C-major for this occasion, but being suddenly attacked by illness had made but slight progress with it, and the concert was to come off in two days' time. Wegeler, one of his friends, a doctor, was able slightly to relieve his suffering, and then the poor composer in bed set to work writing the piece, each sheet as it was thrown off being taken away to four copyists, who were in attendance in the next room to write out the separate orchestral parts. At the rehearsal the next day, it was found that the pianoforte was tuned half a tone lower than the other instruments; but no wise discomposed, Beethoven proceeded to play the concerto, transposing it as he went along from the key of C-major to C-sharp! And Seyfried, one of his friends, says that several times when Beethoven asked him to turn over the leaves of his concertos when playing in public, he found nothing but a few sheets of paper with unintelligible bundles of notes (scattered as it seemed at random on them) here and there; it was a special delight to Beethoven to observe his companion's tremor in attempting to turn over these pages at the right time.

It was in the year 1800 that Beethoven at last was compelled to acknowledge to himself the terrible

calamity of almost total deafness that had befallen him. He writes to his friend Wegeler, 'If I had not read somewhere that man must not of his own free will depart this life, I should long ere this have been no more, and that through my own act. . . . What is to be the result of this the good God alone knows. I beg of you not to mention my state to any one, not even to Lorch (Wegeler's wife).' 'But,' he continues, 'I live only in my music, and no sooner is one thing completed than another is begun. In fact, as at present, I am often engaged on three or four compositions at one time. Give my kind regards to all, especially to the good Frau Hofrätin, Frau von Breuning, and tell her that even now I sometimes have a "raptus."'

Another time he writes the following pathetic lines to the same person :—

'To give you some idea of my extraordinary deafness, I must tell you that in the theatre I am obliged to lean close up against the orchestra in order to understand the actors, and when a little way off I hear none of the high notes of instruments or singers. It is most astonishing that in conversation some people never seem to observe this ; being subject to fits of absence, they attribute it to that cause. I often can scarcely hear a person if speaking low ; I can distinguish the tones but not the words, and yet I feel it intolerable if any one shouts to me. Heaven alone knows how it is to end. How often have I cursed my existence ! Plutarch led me to resignation. I shall strive if possible to set Fate

at defiance, although there must be moments in my life when I cannot fail to be the most unhappy of God's creatures. I entreat you to say nothing of my affliction to any one, not even to Lorchen'—(Wegeler's wife and Frau von Breuning's daughter).

But at first all was not gloom; for Beethoven was in love—not the love of fleeting fancy, that like other poets he may have experienced before, but deeply, tragically, in love; and it seems that, for a time at least, this love was returned. The lady was the Countess Julia Guicciardi, but his dream did not last long, for in the year 1801 she married a Count Gallenberg. Hardly anything is known of this love-affair of Beethoven's. A few letters full of passionate tenderness, and with a certain very pathetic simple trustfulness in her love running through them all—on which her marriage shortly afterwards is a strange comment—the 'Moonlight Sonata,' vibrating as it is throughout with a lover's supremest <sup>4th</sup>ecstasy of devotion, these are the only records of that one blissful epoch in the poor composer's life; but how much it affected his after life, how it mingled in the dreams from which his loveliest creations of later years arose, it is impossible now to say. In a letter to Wegeler, dated November 16th, 1801, he says: 'You can hardly realise what a miserable desolate life mine has been for the last two years; my defective hearing everywhere pursuing me like a spectre, making me fly from every one, and appear a misanthrope; and yet no one in reality is less so!

This change [to a happier life] has been brought about by a lovely and fascinating girl who loves me and whom I love. After the lapse of two years I have again enjoyed some blissful moments, and now for the first time I feel that marriage can bestow happiness ; but alas ! she is not in the same rank of life as myself. . . . You shall see me as happy as I am destined to be here below—not unhappy. No, that I could not bear. I will grasp Fate by the throat ; it shall not utterly crush me. Oh, it is so glorious to live one's life a thousand times !' No misanthrope this, surely ;—he could not always speak the speech of common men, or care for the tawdry bravery of titles or fine clothes in which they strutted, but what a heart there was in the man, what a wondrous insight into all the beauty of the world, visible and invisible around him ! The most glorious love-song ever composed, 'Adelaïde,' was written by him—but Julia Guicciardi preferred a Count Gallenberg, keeper of the Royal Archives in Vienna, and Beethoven to the end of his days went on his way alone.

It was at this time that he composed his oratorio, 'The Mount of Olives,' which can hardly be reckoned amongst his finest works ; and his one opera—but such an opera—'Fidelio.' The greater part of these works was composed during his stay, in the summer months, at Hetzendorf, a pretty secluded little village near Schönbrunn. He spent his days wandering alone through the quiet shady alleys of the imperial park there, and his favourite seat was between two boughs of

a venerable oak, at a height of about two feet from the ground. For some time he had apartments at a residence of Baron Pronay's, near this village ; but he suddenly left, 'because the Baron would persist in making him profound bows every time that he met him.' Like a true poet, he delighted in the country. 'No man on earth,' he writes, 'loves the country more. Woods, trees, and rock, gives the response which man requires. Every tree seems to say, "Holy, holy."'

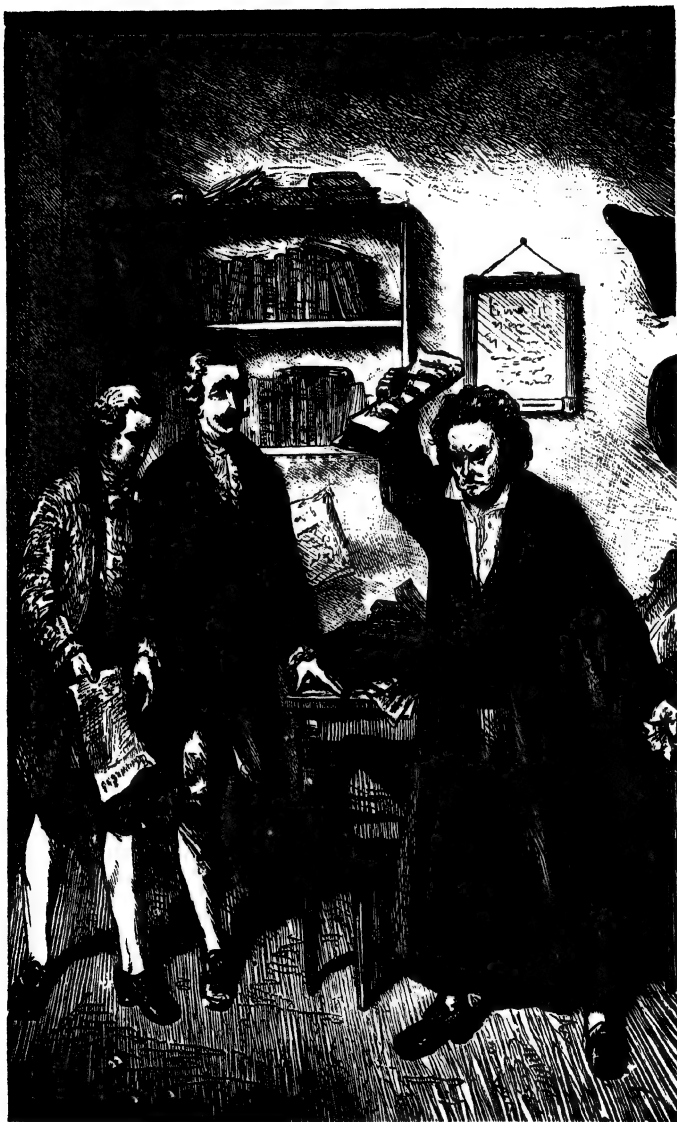
In 1804 the magnificent 'Eroica' symphony was completed. This had originally been commenced in honour of Napoleon Buonaparte, then First Consul, who, Beethoven—throughout his life an ardent Republican—then believed, was about to bring liberty to all the nations of Europe. When the news of the empire came the dream departed, and Beethoven, in a passionate rage, tore the title-page of the symphony in two, and, with a torrent of imprecations against the tyrant, stamped on the torn fragments.

'My hero—a tyrant!' he shrieked, as he trampled on the poor page. On this page the inscription had been simply, 'BONAPARTE—LUIGI V. BEETHOVEN.' For some years he refused to publish the work, and when at last this was done, the inscription read as follows :—'Sinfonia Eroica per festigiare il sovvenire d'un grand' uomo' (Heroic symphony to celebrate the memory of a great man). When Napoleon died, in 1821, Beethoven said, 'Seventeen years before I composed the music for this occasion;' and surely no

grander music than that of the 'Funeral March' was ever composed for the obsequies of a fallen hero. This is not the place to enter into a description of the marvellous succession of colossal works—symphonies, concertos, sonatas, trios, quartets, etc., culminating in the Choral Symphony, his ninth, and last—which through those long years of a silent life, imprisoned within himself, the great master put forth. His deafness prevented his appearing in public to conduct, although with the natural desire of a composer to be present at the production of his own work, he long struggled to take his part in the first performances of symphonies and concertos. Spohr thus, not very feelingly, describes the last occasion on which Beethoven performed in public at a concert in 1808 :—

'Beethoven was playing a new pianoforte concerto of his own : but at the beginning of the first *tutti*, forgetting that he was the soloist, he jumped up, and began to conduct in his usual style. At the first *sforzando* he flung out his arms so violently as to extinguish both the lights on the piano desk. The audience laughed, and he was so put out by the disturbance that he made the orchestra leave off and recommence. Seyfried, fearing lest the mishap would again occur when the same passage was repeated, sent for two choir boys to stand by Beethoven and hold the candles. One of them unsuspectingly drew near to look over the pianoforte part. When the fatal *sforzando* arrived he received such a smart slap in the face from Beethoven's right hand that





he dropped his light in terror. The other boy, more cautious than his companion, had been anxiously following Beethoven's every movement, and, by suddenly stooping, escaped the blow. If the audience had laughed heartily before, they now burst into a truly Bacchanalian roar. This threw Beethoven into such a rage that he broke half-a-dozen strings at the first chords of the solo. All the efforts to restore quietness and attention were for the time fruitless. The first *allegro* of the concerto was, therefore, quite lost. After this accident Beethoven would never give another concert.'

Is it to be wondered at that, living such an intensely solitary life, the great composer became 'eccentric,' as men say? Some may find occasion to laugh at a story like that which Spohr, a respectable and sound musician, who did not himself deserve to hold a candle to Beethoven, tells with such gusto, and be amused with the tales of Beethoven's conducting—how at the *pp* he used to sink down under the desk, and at the *ff* spring up and madly dash his arms about; but there are others who will only feel the intenser admiration and pity when listening to such recitals. With all this, he went on and worked to the last; deaf, he still gave the world music of such wondrous beauty, such mighty grandeur and pathos, seeming to touch the very heart of things, as never was heard before or since! When his great choral symphony was first performed he attempted to conduct, but in reality another conductor was stationed near him

to give the right time to the band. After the majestic instrumental movements had been played came the final one, concluding with Schiller's 'Hymn to Joy.' The chorus breaks forth, thundering out in concert with all the instruments. At the words 'Seid umschlungen, Millionen,' the audience could no longer restrain their excited delight, and burst into tremendous applause, drowning the voices of singers and the sounds of strings and brass. The last notes are heard, but still Beethoven stands there absorbed in thought,—he does not know that the music is ended. This was the first time that the people realised the full deprivation of hearing from which he suffered. Fräulein Unger, the soprano, gently takes his arm and turns him round to front the acclaiming multitude. There are few in that crowd who, while they cheer, do not feel the tears stealing down their cheeks at the sight of the poor lonely man who, from the prison-house of his affliction, has brought to them the gladness of thought so divine. Unmoved, he bowed his acknowledgment, and quietly left the building.

But to revert to earlier days. In 1812 he paid a visit to Töplitz, where he met and spent some time with Goethe, whose poetry he always intensely admired. Still he knew that he himself was also a great man, and this, without any silly vanity, but with a certain amusing *naïveté*, comes out in a letter which at this time he wrote to the vivacious Bettina, from which I extract two passages :—

TÖPLITZ, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1812.

MY MOST DEAR KIND FRIEND,—Kings and princes may indeed be able to create professors and privy councillors, and to bestow titles and decorations, but great men they cannot make. Spirits that tower above the common herd, these they cannot pretend to make, therefore they are forced to respect them. When two men like Goethe and myself come together, these grandees must perceive what is accounted great by such as we. On our way home yesterday we met the whole Imperial family. We saw them coming in the distance, when Goethe immediately dropped my arm to place himself on one side, and, say what I would, I could not get him to advance another step. I pressed my hat down upon my head, buttoned up my greatcoat, and made my way with folded arms through the thickest of the throng. Princes and courtiers formed a line; Duke Rudolph took off his hat; the Empress made the first salutation. The great ones of the earth *knew me!* To my infinite amazement I saw the procession file past Goethe, who stood by the side, hat in hand, bending low. I took him to task for it pretty smartly, and gave him no quarter.' (It is just possible that Beethoven here in his self-assertion shows as much or more weakness than Goethe.) . . . 'I told Goethe my opinion of the effect of applause upon men like us—we must be heard with intelligence by our peers. Emotion is very well for women (pardon me), but music ought to strike fire from the souls of men!'

After he left the Lichnowski Palace he was constantly

changing his abode, and sometimes, indeed, had three or four houses on his hands at the same time. Grievous confusion used to reign in his bachelor establishment. It is thus described :—‘ In his room reigned a confusion, an organised chaos, such as can hardly be imagined. Books and music lay on every article of furniture, or were heaped up like pyramids in the four corners. A multitude of letters which he had received during the week or the month covered the floor like a white carpet with red spots. On the window-sill were displayed the remains of a succulent breakfast, by the side or on the top of proof-sheets awaiting correction. There a row of bottles, partly sealed, partly empty ; further on an *écritoire*, and on it a sketch of a quartette. On the pianoforte a flying sheet of note-paper, with the embryo of a symphony, while to bring so many directly opposite things into harmony, everything was united by a thick layer of dust. . . . On one occasion an important paper was missing—neither a sketch nor a loose sheet, but a thick clearly copied score from the Mass in D. At last it was found ; but where, think you ? In the kitchen, where it had been used to wrap up eatables !’ House-keepers were a constant trouble to him ; and, indeed, he once tried to dispense with servants altogether ; but the consequence, in a banquet which he cooked with his own hands for himself and his friends, was so disastrous, that a new cook had speedily to be engaged. One of his servants had, in a quarrel, actually scratched the composer’s face ; and Beethoven, writing to ask a friend

to find him another, says : ‘ As for the new one, you know pretty well what I require—good steady conduct, a good character, and not to be of a *bloodthirsty nature*, that I may feel my life to be safe, as for the sake of various scamps in the world I should like to live a little longer.’

He used to rise at daybreak, work without interruption till two o’clock, then dine, then, in wet and fine weather alike, he would make the circle of the town two or three times on foot. His figure everywhere was familiar. With long unkempt hair, careless attire, and hurried gait, he went striding along, constantly humming to himself, and when he became excited by some new idea, waving his arms about in apparently a frantic manner. He used constantly to carry his note-book with him, to jot down the ideas as they came. With the twilight he returned, and then, then only, he loved to sit at his piano and play—though, alas! the loudest chords sounded only very faintly to his ear. He did not work much during the evening, but smoked his pipe, sometimes played the violin or viola, which was always laid beside him on the piano, or went to read the news at a neighbouring tavern. An amusing illustration of his wandering habits is given in an account of his stay for some time one summer at Greifendorf, where one of his brothers, Johann, had an estate :—

‘ One of the peasants, then a young man, had a little adventure with Beethoven. He was driving a pair of young oxen, unaccustomed to the yoke, from Ziegelofen

to the castle, when he met Beethoven screaming and violently gesticulating. The man called out, "More quietly, please," but Beethoven took no heed. The oxen were frightened, and ran up a steep bank. The driver with difficulty stopped them, turned them round, and led them back to the road. Another time Beethoven was returning from Ziegelofen singing and waving his hands; again the man called out, but in vain, and with their tails in the air the oxen rushed towards the castle, where some one stopped them. When the driver at length came up, he asked, "Who is that man who frightened my oxen?" When he was told that he was the squire's brother, he replied, "He is a pretty sort of brother."

There are almost endless stories of his fits of abstraction after his deafness became confirmed. One day he went into a restaurant, sat down at a table, and remained there for an hour without moving. Suddenly awaking he shouted to the waiter, 'What have I to pay?' 'You have had nothing yet; what shall I bring?' the waiter called aloud in his ear. 'Bring what you like, and leave me alone!' was the answer. And one day a visitor called upon Beethoven about noon, and found him seated in his shirt-sleeves, his face having the most extraordinary appearance. It turned out that the previous night he had lathered it before shaving, then forgotten what he had done; the soap had dried, and now looked like paste sticking to his chin and cheeks. It was very difficult in those days to get him to improvise, as he had once

done so constantly ; indeed, the only way to manage it was by stratagem. Thus on one occasion, before he became totally deaf, at a friend's house, the visitors by arrangement went into an adjoining room, while Beethoven and his host, by means of the note-book which he now always carried about with him, conversed on financial matters. Then the host, as if by accident, struck a few notes on the piano, and began to play one of Beethoven's own compositions, with all sorts of blunders and wrong notes. The composer of course corrected him, and for this purpose it was necessary to take a seat at the piano. Then the host on some pretext retired into the next room, leaving Beethoven alone at the piano. At first, while the others were listening there, he played only a few sad detached chords, as if afraid of being caught, then the improvisation went on in strange weird style, with all sorts of extraordinary transitions and varieties of mood. 'He revelled,' says the narrator, 'in bold strong moods rather than in soft and gentle ones. The muscles of his face swelled, the veins distended, his eyes rolled wildly, his mouth trembled convulsively. He had the appearance of an enchanter mastered by the spirit he had himself conjured up.'

His later years were embittered with troubles about his nephew Carl, a youth to whom he was fondly attached, but who shamefully repaid the love of the desolate old man. Letters like the following to the teacher in whose house the boy lived, show the constant



thought and affection given to this boy :—‘ Your estimable lady is politely requested to let the undersigned know as soon as possible (that I may not be obliged to keep it all in my head) how many pairs of stockings, trousers, shoes, and drawers are required, and how many yards of kerseymere to make a pair of black trousers for my tall nephew.’ Shamefully did Carl repay all this goodness ; and indeed it was by his neglect and desertion that the poor composer’s death was towards the end accelerated. Carl, unable through his idleness and drunken habits to pass certain examinations for a mercantile situation which his uncle had procured for him, attempted to commit suicide, and after being sent to an asylum, was ordered to leave Vienna within twenty-four hours. With his sorrowful uncle he set out for Greifendorf, the estate already mentioned of Johann van Beethoven ; butt he composer could not long remain there in the society of his vulgar, brutal brother, and on ~~a~~ cold day of pitiless rain in December, his brother refusing even to lend him a closed carriage, he was compelled to make the journey to Vienna in an open conveyance—no other than a common milk cart ! When he reached the city he was suffering from a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs—he had received his death-stroke.

Carl was despatched for a doctor, but the heartless fellow went off to his old haunts, and among the billiard players of the tavern forgot all about the commission he had been charged with. Two days actually passed,

and it was only on the third day that a servant, to whom the matter was mentioned, and who happened to be taken ill and carried to the hospital, remembered there the doctor's name, and besought him to go and see Beethoven. On the doctor hastening to the house he found him dangerously ill, but the first act of the gentle-hearted composer was to have his will drawn up, appointing Carl the sole legatee of his property. This money, amounting to about £1000, was after his death found in one of his boxes ; but, though wanting many comforts, he would touch nothing of it for himself, and he entreated a friend to write to the Philharmonic Society in London, reminding them of an offer they had previously made to give a concert for his benefit. Steps were at once taken by Sir George Smart (the friend of Weber) and Moscheles, the well-known pianist, to arrange for this, and £100 was instantly despatched to Vienna to the assistance of the dying composer. Thus, although Beethoven was not in absolute need, the resolution he had taken to help his nephew had deprived him of many things he needed, and this £100, so promptly and generously sent, proved the greatest blessing to him at the last. Among his parting words was a request to his friend Schindler to write to London thanking them for their munificent gift, saying that 'they had cheered his last days, and thus at the brink of death he thanked the Philharmonic Society of England, and prayed God would bless them.'

His last moments were near. On the morning of

the 24th of March 1827 he took the sacrament, and when the clergyman was gone, and his friends stood round his bed, he muttered, '*Plaudite amici, comedia finita est.*' He then fell into an agony so intense, that he could no longer articulate, and thus continued until the evening of the 26th. A violent thunderstorm arose: one of his friends, watching by his bedside, when the thunder was rolling and a vivid flash of lightning lit up the room, saw him suddenly open his eyes, lift his right hand upwards for some seconds—as if in defiance of the powers of evil—with clenched fist and a stern solemn expression on his face; and then he sank back and died.

At the funeral a vast crowd of some thirty thousand persons assembled on the *glacis* where his house was situated, and followed in the procession to the grave. Eight Capellmeisters were pall-bearers, and thirty-six distinguished musicians and other artists followed bearing torches. Mozart's *Requiem* was sung in St. Augustine's Church, the celebrated Lablache taking the bass part; and then to the music of one of his own funeral marches the bodily form of Beethoven, greatest of all musicians whom the earth has yet known, was laid in the quiet resting-place in the Währing churchyard, where now a stone, with only the name 'Beethoven' on it, tells of the one laid there.

To the descriptions already given of his personal appearance, may be added the following by Weber, who called upon him in the later years of his life, and

after mentioning the dreadful disorder of his room—music, money, clothing being scattered about on the floor, with linen from the wash on the dirty bed, a broken coffee-cup on the table, and the open piano covered with dust—says :—

‘Just so must have looked King Lear or one of Ossian’s bards. His thick grey hair was flung upwards, and disclosed the sanctuary of his lofty vaulted forehead. His nose was square like that of a lion, his chin broad, with those remarkable folds which all his portraits show ; his jaws formed as if to crack the hardest nuts, his mouth soft and noble. Over the broad face, seamed with scars from the smallpox, was spread a dark redness. From under the thick closely pressed eyebrows gleamed a pair of small flashing eyes. The square broad form of a Cyclops was wrapped in a shabby dressing-gown, much torn about the sleeves.’

Yet what a loving and loveable nature this Cyclops had ! I know no more beautiful story than the one told by Madame Ertmann to Mendelssohn many years after Beethoven’s death, of how when she had lost her child he did not visit her for some time, and then sent word asking her to call upon him. When she came he only said, ‘We will talk in music,’ then he played to her for more than an hour, and she says, ‘In *it* he said everything to me ; and at length even gave me comfort.’

And how nobly and simply, without any spurious modesty, he speaks of his own work ! The following

words, so like those of Newton, were spoken by him near the end of his life:—‘I feel as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes;’ and again: ‘I hope still to bring a few great works into the world, and then, like an old child, to end my earthly career somewhere among good people.’

## WEBER.

BORN DECEMBER 17, 1786. DIED JUNE 5, 1826.

*I can write nothing about my works. Hear them played! In my music you will find myself.*

WEBER.

No opera ever had so great an immediate success as 'Der Freischütz,' but nothing annoyed the composer so much as the constant association of that work, and that only, with his name. When he was in London he wrote to his wife:—'They talk of giving "Der Freischütz" at Covent Garden. My horror at the thought is more than I can tell you. Think of the awful nuisance of hammering through that opera again from beginning to end. The bare idea drives me to distraction.' But for all his protestation, it is as one of the chiefs of the Romantic School that Weber will be always remembered. There have been musicians greater, but none truer than he—none whose life was more singly devoted to art, or whose beautiful music reflected a more loveable nature than was his.

There were plenty of misfortunes in his life, as in the lives of most artists, but perhaps his greatest was the possession of a most flighty and foolish old father.

Franz Anton von Weber, an uncle, by the way, of Constance Weber, Mozart's wife, had been almost everything in turns,—courtier, soldier, director of theatres, travelling comedian, and musical performer. A widower with several children, at the age of fifty he fell in love with a pretty girl, Genoveva von Brenner, aged sixteen, and as he usually contrived to conquer female hearts wherever he went, so he prevailed on her to marry him in 1785, and the next year was born, on 17th December 1786, Carl Maria Friedrich Ernest von Weber, fated to be *the* Weber of musical renown.

It was a hard life for the poor young wife, constantly travelling about with Franz Anton and three grown-up daughters and a son by his first marriage, who for five years after Carl Maria was born formed a small strolling company performing in Cassel, Meiningen, Nuremberg, and other towns under the name of 'Weber's Company of Comedians.' Franz Anton, like Beethoven's father, made the boy's earliest years miserable by his efforts to make a wonder-child of him, and the little fellow had to labour at the violin with trembling fingers and aching brain, till a thorough loathing of music and everything connected with it took possession of him. It is said that Fridolin, his half-brother, who helped his father in this precious scheme of education for the child, once in impatience of the blunders he was making tore his fiddle-bow out of his hand, rapping him sharply over the knuckles, and exclaiming, 'Whatever may be made of you, Carl, it won't be a

musician!’ Fortunately more sensible teachers took him in hand before long.

It was a curious childhood, lived among actors and in theatres. His son and biographer, Baron Max von Weber, says, ‘As child of a theatrical manager, his playfellows were actors’ children. His woods, his meadows, and his gardens were daubed on canvas: a painted palace was his street. His boyhood’s mimic fights were fought, not with sticks cut from the forest bush, but with silvered swords and cardboard shields, with which the actors, as heroes or robbers, fought out their mimic fights upon the stage at night. It was not on the hillside in the open air that little Carl stormed the imaginary fortress with his playmates. The stage represented the castle which was to be defended against the assailants from the orchestra, and side scenes and traps were the vantage points or pitfalls of the battle.’

In their wanderings the Weber family rested for a time in the little town of Hildburghausen, for poor Genoveva’s health had become so broken down that for a while it was utterly impossible for her to follow her husband in his strolling career. Here for the first time little Carl, then ten years old, found a really good teacher in Johann Peter Heuschkel, the conductor of the Duke of Meiningen’s orchestra, a talented and good-hearted young man, under whom the boy made very marked and rapid progress indeed. But the wandering life soon attracted his father again, and we



next find the boy, in 1797, at Salzburg, where Carl was taken as a pupil by Michael Haydn, brother of the great Haydn, and himself a musician and composer of considerable repute, who seems to have been attracted by the clever and winning ways of the delicate-looking little fellow, and to have given him special care and attention not bestowed on all the old musician's pupils. But this did not last very long. His poor mother died in 1798, and in 1800 we hear of the boy playing with great success at public concerts at Erfurt, Gotha, and Leipzig, under his father's management, and in the same year his first opera, 'The Dumb Girl of the Forest,' was written, a work which Weber in after years spoke of 'as a very crude production, but not wholly without inventive power.' A two-act comic opera, 'Peter Schmoll and his Neighbours,' was soon afterwards composed by him, and for this we have Michael Haydn's testimony that, 'In all truth, with full conviction, and with the best judgment, I attest that this opera has been composed according to the truest rules of harmony, with much fire, great delicacy, and appropriate feeling,' a wonderfully generous statement for the severe old capellmeister. The next removal was to Vienna, where Carl was for some time a pupil of the Abbé Vogler, then esteemed one of the greatest composers and theorists of the time, and for whom, despite a good deal that savoured of the charlatan and selfish pedant in his character, Weber always entertained a sincere affection.

At the age of seventeen, on the Abbé's recommendation, the young musician obtained the appointment of conductor of the orchestra at the Breslau theatre. Owing to the bitter opposition of many of the musicians in the place who considered themselves affronted by a mere boy, as they called him, being in authority amongst them, he did not remain here very long, but the experience was doubtless useful to him in familiarising him with the works of other composers and the duties of a conductor. Here he is believed to have written the music to a fantastic libretto dealing with the supernatural—always an attractive subject to Weber—called 'Rübezahl,' but beyond a few numbers and the overture, afterwards remodelled and known as his great 'Ruler of the Spirits' overture, nothing is now known of this work. Just at the time when this overture was completed the composer's life very nearly came to an end. He had invited a friend, Berner, a musician of talent, to come and try it over one evening. When Berner arrived at the house, he saw a light in Weber's room, but on knocking at the door received no answer. Pushing the door open, he went in, and saw no one, but advancing towards the sofa stumbled over something. It was Weber himself lying senseless on the ground, and by his side lay a broken bottle. Berner lifted him up, laid him on the sofa, and cried loudly for help. Franz Anton, his father, who was in another room, hurried in. A doctor was sent for, and after a time the youth recovered consciousness. The accident had happened in

this way. After working for a long time and feeling very cold, he had stretched out his hand carelessly towards a flask of wine, as he thought, that stood on the table, and had drunk from this. The bottle, however, did not contain wine, but aquafortis, which his father was in the habit of using for some engraving work he was doing, and which had been most inexcusably left on the table. For weeks the young man's life was in jeopardy, his throat and mouth were terribly burnt, and it is said that the beautiful voice he possessed, and which had made his singing celebrated wherever he went, never afterwards quite recovered its old richness and strength.

The next few years of young Weber's life were by no means the happiest, spent as they were at the court of one of the most worthless and dissolute monarchs in all Christendom, the King of Würtemberg. Through Prince Eugen, an enthusiastic musical *dilettante*, the post of secretary to his brother, Prince Ludwig, had been obtained for Weber, and for several years the young musician lived at Stuttgart, vainly trying to keep the prince's accounts in order, and constantly getting into trouble, either with the king, for his attempts to obtain money for the Prince, whose affairs were always in the greatest confusion, or with his master, for the failure of these endeavours to raise the funds necessary for his debauches. Twice Weber was consigned to prison, the second time on a charge which led to his banishment, and appears to have had some foundation in fact in the peculation of public moneys—in reality

taken by his unscrupulous old father Franz Anton, who, much to poor Weber's dismay, one day arrived from his travels and quartered himself, with his huge double-bass and two great basket-beds for a couple of favourite poodles, in his son's narrow quarters. However, the happy artist's faculty of making the best of everything did not forsake young Weber, and during the first of these sojourns in prison he got hold of a wretched old piano, and managed to tune it with a door-key, and so obtained some solace; indeed, it was then that he composed his beautiful song, 'Ein steter Kampf ist unser Leben.' A rather comical story of his relations with the king is extant in connection with this imprisonment, and shows both the annoyances he must have had to endure and the hasty and impolitic spirit with which he sometimes met them. One day, just after leaving the king's apartment, where he had been most outrageously abused, an old woman accosted him in the corridor, inquiring the room where the royal washer-woman was to be found. 'There,' said Weber, pointing to the one he had just left. The old woman entered, and was immediately pounced on and stormed at by the king, who had a horror of old women, and demanded how she came there and who sent her. The poor creature stammered out that it was the gentleman who had just left, and the king, in a tremendous rage at this flagrant act of *lèse-majesté*, at once sent orders for Weber's arrest, and the young secretary was forthwith consigned to prison, where he remained playing the jingling old

piano and composing, until Prince Ludwig contrived to obtain his release. But the king never really forgave the insult.

This life in Stuttgart, at the disorderly court and among boon companions, courtiers, actors, musicians, utterly unworthy of his company, was by no means beneficial to him, and great as the disaster which compelled him to leave appeared to be at the time, it was undoubtedly about the best thing that could have befallen him. A charge of taking money as bribes from young men, to whom appointments at court were promised, was preferred against him, and though it was shown that he was perfectly innocent of this, and if any one was to blame it must have been poor foolish old Franz Anton, Weber was kept for sixteen days in prison, and then only released on 26th February 1810, being packed off with his father in a guarded carriage, taken to the frontier, and there bidden never to return, under pain of heavy punishment. So, with forty florins only between them, the two Webers went forth once more on their travels.

Weber had one blessed gift, a joyous temperament, that up to the last never forsook him, and we next find him among the students of Heidelberg, singing his sprightly songs to his own favourite guitar accompaniment, and giving concerts, delighting every one with his magnificent pianoforte playing and improvisations—at Mannheim producing his cantata, 'Der Erste Ton,' composed some time before, which was immensely

successful, and, better just then even than fame, adding the welcome sum of fifty-three florins to his almost empty purse. Soon afterwards he found his way to Darmstadt, where his old master Vogler was, who welcomed him with open arms, and introduced him to young Jacob Meyer Beer, his pupil (afterwards known as Meyerbeer, the famous composer, of whom I regret that my limited space will not allow me to give a complete sketch), and a friendship soon sprang up between the two gifted young men. Of them old Vogler said afterwards, 'Ah, had I been forced to leave the world before I had formed these two, I should have died a miserable man.' Weber was still waiting for an appointment, or, better still, an opportunity of producing his opera 'Sylvana,' which had been written in Stuttgart; but in the meantime, what with pianoforte playing with young Meyerbeer, singing and dancing in the public gardens, and gay frolics, not always perhaps of the most sensible kind, he contrived to exist in the very dull and respectable town of Darmstadt. One of the young men's tricks was certainly not a very brilliant one. Weber had a dog to which the name of 'Mamselle' was given, and their delight was to take it with them in the streets, and, whenever a pretty girl passed, to call 'Mamselle, Mamselle!' a title which the damsel was pretty sure to suppose intended for herself, and when she turned round inquiringly and found it was only the dog that was being called, their delight was unbounded!

In August 1810 occurred an event important to

Weber in more ways than one. His opera 'Sylvana' was at last performed at the Frankfort theatre, and the actress who took the part of the heroine (a girl who at first appears to be dumb, as in his first opera), was Caroline Brandt, afterwards to be his charming and devoted wife, though neither of them then dreamed of such a possibility. Weber's evil star once more thwarted him. On the first night a tremendous counter-attraction thinned the theatre. A Madame Blanchard that day had been advertised to make a balloon ascent. Nothing was talked of, nothing could be thought of but this balloon, then considered a most marvellous affair. The opera passed off very tamely, and Weber's remuneration only amounted to a hundred florins; but that was something, and helped to reduce some of his Stuttgart debts still weighing on him. After discharging them he was left again, as he said, with 'nothing but a little talent in the cupboard.'

In the following year Weber found that it was necessary to begin a *Wanderreise* once more, for his funds were so low that his careful biographer tells us he was compelled to sell his last new pair of trousers to pay his share of the expense of a short country merry-making expedition he had joined in. A farewell concert under the Duke's patronage was arranged, and came off with the greatest *éclat*, bringing in the very acceptable profit of 200 florins to start him on his journey.

Passing through Augsburg, Carl Maria arrived in

Munich, and soon found himself at home in the even then famous artistic city. A concert was given, at which his 'Erste Ton' produced but a moderate effect, but a pianoforte concerto played by himself, and a concertino composed by him for the celebrated clarionet player Barman, had an overwhelming reception. Soon afterwards the pretty little opera which for some time had been in his portfolio, 'Abu Hassan,' was produced, but ill-luck again attended him. After the overture and the first few numbers had been rapturously applauded, suddenly the cry of 'fire' was heard. There were shrieks and the wildest confusion—the curtain fell, and though fortunately the audience were at last persuaded that the alarm was a perfectly false one, the disturbance had unhinged their minds for calmly appreciating the beauties of the opera, and the performance ended without the triumphant applause that his friends had predicted.

But nowhere did Weber find a settled home, and it may be that at this time the wanderings of an artist's life suited him the best. Passing very briefly over visits paid by him to Leipzig, where he was almost tempted to relinquish music for literature, and wrote a considerable part of a novel, 'Wanderings of an Artist,'—Berlin, where 'Sylvana' was produced at last with the completest success—Gotha, where he went by the invitation of the Duke, who, like several of his successors, was a friendly but rather tiresome melomaniac—and Weimar, where Goethe, by the way,



behaved most rudely to him—his visit to Prague in January 1813, where he was fated to remain for several years, is the next event of importance to be touched on. Very unexpectedly he was offered and accepted the post of conductor of the opera there.

And now began a period of hard work. In re-organising the band, making journeys to engage new singers, producing with the minutest care a long series of operas by other composers, his time was constantly occupied, and he must often have yearned for more opportunities of leisure for his own compositions. But the training was of use to him, and though he still was too much drawn into the circle of dissipated fools that infested the theatre, and though he became entangled in one or two love-affairs of which he was afterwards ashamed, he was gradually gaining a firmer mastery over himself, and a truer sense of the refined and noble in art and human life. And in January of the following year Caroline Brandt, the young actress who had before so charmingly impersonated his own 'Sylvana,' appeared for the first time at the Prague theatre in the part of 'Aschenbrödel' (Cinderella), charming every one with her lovely voice and graceful acting, and the influence, new to the young conductor, of a pure, womanly, and refined nature.

I know of few prettier idyls than the story, which I must very briefly tell, of the love that now sprang up between the two, and, rare enough as such happiness has been in the lives of great musicians, led to a

wedded life in which, whatever troubles might come from outside, there was unbroken peace and glad contentment ever to be found at home by the harassed and overworked composer. By the side of Constanze Mozart, Cecilia Mendelssohn, and Clara Schumann, Caroline Weber will always be remembered.

Charming actress and singer as he had recognised her to be, it was to an accident that Weber owed the opportunity of learning the true beauty and simplicity of her character in home life. One night she had been talking to him on the stage, and carelessly placing her foot in one of the wing-grooves when the scene was suddenly shifted, she was violently thrown down and rather seriously hurt. The next day Weber called at her home to inquire, and in a little while he was permitted to visit the house. And there in her society, with her careful mother keeping guard, Weber felt the charm of the refined life of a pure woman's home, for probably the first time in his life. He loved her with a new reverent love, and before long had the joy of knowing that she, too, cared for him. It could hardly have been expected that everything would run quite smoothly in this love affair. Caroline was rather exacting and inclined to be jealous, and it was a long time before she consented to allow their engagement to be made public. And it is not so very surprising that she wavered at first, for Weber insisted that after marriage she should not continue on the stage, and, for a girl with all the love of applause which is so dear to

every actor and actress, and the love of art which she possessed, it was something of a trial to her to yield in this matter. Some of Weber's letters written in those early days, and full of passionate ardour, are preserved, with passages in them like the following :—' I cannot understand my happiness! I seem to wander in a dream where all is flooded by a rosy light, and I must touch myself to realise that all is possible—is true !' At last love conquered, she yielded, and their betrothal was made publicly known.

His great object was now to have a settled position and be able to offer Caroline a home. This he obtained by his appointment as conductor of the German Opera in Dresden, a post which he continued to hold up to the time of his death. On 13th January 1817, he arrived in this city, and the same night wrote to his betrothed :—' It was with the strangest feelings that I drove down the mountain-side and saw lying before me the city within whose walls a life's career is to be decided ; may God give it His blessing ! All that lies in my power to do shall be well and truly done.' And bravely and well was it done, despite the constant intrigues and miserable tricks of a clever rival, Morlacchi, the director of the Italian Opera, the ceaseless cabals of court officials, and the inordinate demands of the king, who was always requiring some new opera to be produced at the shortest notice, or cantatas to celebrate some stupid royal wedding, or masses for some trumpery court ceremonial to be

composed in a hurry by the overworked composer. But bravely and well he went through it all to the end.

The court ceremonies were a great trial to him. 'No doubt,' says his son, 'in the court dress which he had borrowed for the first occasion, and which was by no means an irreproachable fit, Weber's appearance was anything but imposing. His long neck craned awkwardly out of the low-standing collar of his coat, his thin hands protruded contrary to all etiquette out of the sleeves of his old-fashioned uniform, his sword would insist on getting between his legs, "And oh, my calves," he wrote to Caroline, "they might have done honour to a poodle!"' Soon he had settled down in earnest to his duties at the theatre, and it was not long before all, musicians and courtiers alike, were compelled to recognise, though not without grumbling at first, that here was a man who thoroughly knew his work, and more than that, was resolute in seeing that it was well done by those under his command.

It was here at Dresden that, meeting with Friedrich Kind the poet, the design of writing an opera on the old German legend of 'Der Freischütz,' which many years previously Weber had already entertained and cast aside (together with several other subjects, all with a flavour of the supernatural in them, the grand subject of 'Tannhäuser,' afterwards to be taken by Wagner, being among the number), was considered in earnest and undertaken in co-operation with Kind,

who wrote the libretto. It was on 23d February 1817 that the first act of the opera was handed to him, and on reading it over he said 'he felt a spring of melody bubbling up within him.' One after the other came the lovely airs, seeming to spring to life almost of themselves, and as Kind, the vain, shallow-pated poet said, 'I cannot see what there is in the melody of "The Bridesmaid's Chorus" to make such a wondrous fuss about! Why, from the very words it could not have been otherwise! Every man would have hit upon the same idea.' That is what one often thinks in hearing some compositions in which words and music seem so perfectly to go together; but the wonder is that somehow or other no one did hit upon the same idea before! Weber constantly consulted Caroline as the opera progressed under his hands, and it is to her, whom he called his 'public with two eyes,' that we owe a number of sensible alterations in the libretto—especially in the curtailment of the stupid part of the Hermit, which Kind had made one of the most important.

At last his wedding day drew near, and at the beginning of November Weber started for Prague. On 4th November the ceremony took place in that city. Early in the morning he confessed, took the sacrament with his betrothed, and then an hour later the wedding cortège set out for the church of St. Henry, where, with the whole operatic *troupe* taking part in the chorus, the solemn words that made the two man and wife

were spoken. Of Weber's feelings the following entry in his diary tells something :—‘ May God bless our union, and grant me power and strength to make my beloved Lina as happy and contented as my inmost heart would desire ! May His mercy lead me in all my doings ! ’

After the wedding tour, during which he gave several brilliant concerts on the way, he brought her back to Dresden, where there was a surprise in waiting for her. She had expected to find the ordinary bachelor's abode, but he had carefully been stocking the house for some time beforehand ; dishes and sauce-pans, flower-stands and elegant furniture — nothing had been forgotten in the home to which he brought her. ‘ Der Freischütz,’ at first called ‘ The Jäger's Bride,’ now rapidly advanced, and though his daily duties at the Court Theatre filled up a very large part of his time, by the end of the following year the opera from which he hoped so much was very nearly finished. But before it was produced, another and shorter one, ‘ Preciosa,’ with the exceedingly pretty gipsy and Spanish music he had written, was completed and put on the stage at Berlin, with complete success, so far as the public were concerned.

In June Weber and his wife went to Berlin for the production of the ‘ Freischütz.’ They had been by no means certain of the reception which it would meet with, on account of the many novel effects and the rather hazardous ‘ Wolf's Glen ’ incantation scene in it.

When the night came the theatre was densely packed. First, the overture was tumultuously encored, and then, as the piece progressed, and the lovely melodies one after another laid hold of the entranced multitude, and the wild, strange romantic beauty of the unearthly music awed and thrilled them, the triumphant success of the new work was assured. At the end of the second act, while the house was resounding with excited acclamations, the composer had retreated to a dark corner in his wife's box, holding her trembling hands and kissing away the tears that she shed in an ecstasy of joy. At the end not a soul left the house until the composer, amid thunders of applause, was led before the curtain in company with the leading singers; and with every succeeding performance the enthusiasm increased and deepened. Only the critics held aloof—giving another proof of the peculiar stupidity with which they are sometimes unaccountably afflicted. Tieck called it 'the most unmusical row that ever roared upon the stage,' and Spohr, who ought to have known better, said some time afterwards, 'As I never had any great opinion of Weber's talent as a composer, I wanted to hear this opera, in order to discover upon what its wonderful success is founded; but the riddle was by no means solved, and I can only explain it by the gift possessed by Weber to write for the general masses.' And no mean gift either, when it produces such music as this. But a greater man than Spohr expressed a far different judgment, and it is altogether

so characteristic, that I must quote it in full :—‘ When “Der Freischütz” became so celebrated, Beethoven (then nearly completely deaf) took the score home with him to study. “I could never have believed it of the poor, weak little mannikin,” he was heard to say, banging on the score with his fist ; “Weber must write operas now—nothing but operas, one after the other.” The *finale* of the second act was still too strange for him. “I see what Weber means,” he exclaimed, “but he has put such devilish queer stuff in here ! When I read the wild hunt, I can’t help laughing ; and yet I feel it is the right thing. That is music which must be heard—heard only—and I—I”—and then a heavy sigh.’

It is a remarkable proof of Weber’s self-possession that at the very time when he was in the whirl of rehearsals and the bustle of life in Berlin, he was busy in putting the last touches to his famous Concerto in F minor, the ‘Concertstück,’ sitting by his wife’s bedside, for she was ill at the time, and then playing the completed piece to her and young Benedict, his pupil, who relates the scene.

Weber had never been strong, and the unceasing labours as conductor and composer that he underwent taxed far too heavily his delicate frame. Sometimes he was able to take a brief holiday at Hosterwitz, on the banks of the Elbe, but even then he used to work six or eight hours a day over the new opera, ‘Euryanthe,’ which, after the success of the ‘Freischütz,’ he was



commissioned to write for Vienna. At times he lounged in the garden, stretching his arms and legs, and crying out in a comically plaintive tone, 'O that I were a shoemaker and had my Sunday, and knew nothing of your C majors and C minors !'

This unlucky 'Euryanthe,' containing some of Weber's finest music, was a cause of terrible annoyance to him, although, when it was first produced in Vienna, it was received with great enthusiasm. Operas must unfortunately have 'librettos,' and 'Euryanthe' has not been the only instance of nobly inspired music being almost utterly wasted and lost by its association with a stupid plot and absurd dialogue. The writer was a half insane blue-stocking, Frau von Chezy, who incessantly annoyed him with the changes which she made in the book and the extravagant estimation she had of the importance of her own share of the work. On the night of the first performance, just before it began, there was a disturbance in the pit, with cries and shouts, and shrieks of laughter, as a fat and shabbily-dressed woman pushed herself through the crowd, shrieking out, 'Make room, make room for me I say ! I tell you I am the poetess !' And the crowd, yelling out 'The poetess ! the poetess !' made way for her. The first success of the work was unfortunately not maintained, and, crushed beneath the stupid story—the Vienna wits called it 'Ennuyante,'—the splendid life that Weber had put into the music could not secure for it more than that *succès d'estime*, which is almost

worse than a complete failure. But in Vienna Weber had the happiness of meeting Beethoven and dining with him. Weber writes: 'We were in the happiest mood. The rough, repulsive man paid me as much attention as if I were a lady to whom he was paying court, and served me at table with the most delicate care. How proud I felt to receive all this kindness and affectionate regard from the great master-spirit. The day will for ever remain impressed on my mind, as well as on that of all who were present.'

After this we hear of the production of the opera in Berlin and of struggles still continued against the perfidious Morlacchi at Dresden, and Spontini, another bitterly hostile rival, at Berlin. Weber, with failing health—for he now was suffering from consumption—still gallantly bore up, but there were signs, that his friends noticed with anxious alarm, of shattered strength and overstrung nerves. At the Quedlinburg Festival he was conducting the orchestra when Madame Funk sang Handel's 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and poor Weber was so overcome with the beauty and religious sentiment of the music, that, after struggling with himself in vain, the baton fell from his grasp, he buried his face in his hands and burst into tears. But despite his illness he never slackened his work, for his absorbing thought now was to provide for his family before he passed away, and with this object he entered into a contract with Charles Kemble to write an opera, 'Oberon,' for London at the price of £500. To

Gubitz, one of his friends, he said, 'Whether I can or no, I must. Money must be made for my family—money, man. I am going to London to die there. Not a word. I know it as well as you.'

And it was with this presentiment, which the knowledge of his fatal disease made almost a certainty, that he laboured so long, 'sitting at his work-table, wrapped up in furs, with his swollen feet in wadded velvet boots, shivering with cold in his heated room, and worn out by his incessant cough,' over the music, bright, beautiful, and grand of that last opera of his, 'Oberon.' The work nearly completed, on a cold winter's day, 7th February 1826, he set out on his last journey to England. On the way he passed through Paris, and was delighted with Boieldieu's 'La Dame Blanche,' and the oysters there. Arrived in England, he received a warm welcome from Sir George Smart, and that gentleman's house in London was his home until the last. Weber writes to his wife in a delighted mood: 'I am allowed to be alone the whole day until five, then we dine and go to the theatre or into society. My solitude in England in no way oppresses me; English life and manners are thoroughly sympathetic to my nature; and my little bit of English, in which I am making tremendous progress, is of incredible advantage to me. The English delight in hearing me speak their language! People are all so good to me with their anxious care. Nobody can be served with greater love and affection in all things than I am. I am cosseted and caressed

like a baby in arms.' The scene at the theatre on his first appearance there was one of most unwonted character. The piece played was 'Rob Roy,' and Weber, on entering the box, had stepped to the front to look round. Instantly 'Weber! Weber!' was shouted everywhere, hats and handkerchiefs were waved, and at first the composer, not recognising his name in the English pronunciation of the 'W,' stood gazing at the crowd in calm wonder. Then suddenly the meaning of it all dawned upon him, and he hastily bowed and retired. But the audience were not satisfied. The performance had to be stopped, the overture to the 'Freischütz' was unanimously called for, and it was not till after it had been played, and another hearty burst of cheering, that Weber was allowed to retire in peace.

He was now busy in superintending the rehearsals of his opera, writing new airs for capricious singers, and patiently bearing all the worry of the work, playing at private houses, and conducting at concerts, all the time with fast dwindling strength and with only one thought—to gather together a few guineas for those he loved at home. The rehearsals, with unimaginative and badly trained chorus-singers, were peculiarly trying to him. A rebuke that he once gave is well worth remembering by the chorus-singers, vastly improved as they now are, of the present day. The piece to be sung was a 'Prayer,' and this the singers commenced, in the usual style, at the top of their voices. 'Stay!' cried Weber. 'No,

not like that! Would you bawl in this way in the presence of God!

At last the eventful day came; 'Oberon' was produced, a glorious triumph for the composer. Wearily he laid down the baton—his work was done.

And now his one thought was going home. He wrote to his wife, 'How will you receive me? In Heaven's name—alone. Let no one disturb my joy of looking again upon my wife, my children, my dearest and my best. . . . Thank God, the end of all is fast approaching.' He meant the end of his London work, but it was indeed the end of all.

On the evening of 4th June he had been talking eagerly of his journey in the company of his devoted friends, Sir George Smart, Moscheles, Fürstenau, and others, and then at ten o'clock retired to bed. His friends wanted him to have some one to keep watch in his room, but he refused. His last words to them were, 'God reward you all for your kind love to me,' and then with Smart and Fürstenau he retired to his bedroom. Fürstenau helped him to undress; he wound up his watch himself, and saying, 'Now, let me sleep,' lay down. The next morning when the servant knocked at his door there was no answer; after a time his friends came to rouse him; still no answer; and then they burst open the door, and found him lying as if in calm sleep, but he was dead; and in that room only the watch he had wound up the night before now sounded with its clear, steady tick as they

looked upon the dead and touched his cold hands and brow.

He was buried in the chapel of St. Mary, Moorfields, on 21st June 1826, and Mozart's 'Requiem,' whose glorious strains have so often been heard when the great and gifted of the earth have been laid in their last resting-place, was the farewell chanted by his brother and sister artists over his grave. Years passed by, and in 1844 his remains were removed to Dresden. 'On 14th December,' says his son, 'a delay having been occasioned by a sharp frost upon the river, the destination was reached. It was the dusk of evening when the coffin was conveyed through countless masses of human beings, who, in solemn silence, lined the streets from the black-draped quay to the Catholic cemetery in Friedrichstadt, and amidst an interminable line of flaming torches which dimly showed the black banner on which were inscribed the words "Weber in Dresden." . . . The torches were extinguished, the crowd dispersed. But by the light of two candles, still burning on the altar, might be seen the form of a small, now middle-aged woman, who had flung herself upon the bier, while a pale young man knelt praying by her side.'









BORN JANUARY 31, 1797. DIED NOVEMBER 19, 1827.

## SCHUBERT.

*Beethoven when dying said, 'Truly, Schubert has a spark of the divine fire.'*

*Le musicien le plus poète que fut jamais.*—LISZT.

IN the Währing churchyard, near Vienna, there are two graves almost side by side. Over the one may be read the inscription 'Beethoven,' over the other 'Schubert.' And little as those amongst whom he lived believed it, we now know that there is not one of all the great musicians of the past to whom a place by the side of the great Beethoven could so fitly have been given as to poor Schubert.

Certainly he was one of the most luckless of all great artists, though the race has never been celebrated for specially good fortune. Miserably poor, ugly, and uninteresting-looking, his finest compositions utterly disregarded during his lifetime—he was never able to hear even an orchestral rehearsal of his grandest symphony, that in C, and after his death large bundles of his MSS. were stuffed away and left to rot in a dark cupboard for many years, until discovered by Messrs. Sullivan and Grove—he lived an utterly obscure life, his genius only

recognized by a few faithful friends, and at the early age of thirty-one passed away from the life that to him had been so weary and sorrowful. The records of that life are very scanty; he wrote few letters, he did not move even to the extent to which Beethoven did in those circles of society where a genius is talked about and his admirers treasure the recollection of his slightest word and deed; a few torn pages from his diary, two or three letters, the list and dates of his works, and above all, the works themselves—these are all. The diary has a curious history. It had by some means got into the possession of an autograph collector in Vienna, in whose hands Aloys Fuchs happened to discover it. But it was very incomplete, and indeed only the record of four days was then remaining. The sordid-minded owner explained that he had for some time been in the habit of tearing out single leaves and selling them as relics to admirers of Schubert who visited him.

Schubert's father was the parish schoolmaster at Lichtenthal, Vienna. He was twice married, and had a large family, of whom ten survived. Franz Peter, a child by the first marriage, was born on 31st January 1797. As every child in Germany learns at school something of music, he very early picked up the rudiments of it, and at eight years of age his father began to teach him the violin. Singing he learnt from Michael Holzer the choirmaster, whose testimony to the early display of talent by him is almost comically straightforward. He says: 'Whenever I wished to

teach him anything new, I found that he had already mastered it. Consequently I cannot be said to have given him any lessons at all. I merely amused myself, and regarded him with dumb astonishment.'

At the age of eleven a small piece of good fortune fell to him, for in a competition for the post of choir-boy in the Imperial Chapel, the examiners for which were the famous Salieri, Mozart's old enemy, and Eybler, he was the selected candidate, and this position entitled him to a free education in the Stadtconvict school. Soon afterwards we find traces of his first compositions. In 1810 he wrote a pianoforte piece for four hands, bearing the remarkable title of '*Leichen-fantasie*,' or Corpse fantasia, and the next year he had ventured on an overture, a quintet, quartet and other instrumental works, besides a long cantata-like piece, '*Hagar's Klage*.' The last composition was seen by Salieri, who detected the talent in it and sent the boy to a musician called Ruczizka for lessons in harmony. Ruczizka soon sent him back, saying, 'He has learnt everything, and God has been his teacher.'

We know little of Schubert's home-life at this time, but however straitened by poverty it was, it can hardly have been altogether unfavourable to the development of his musical powers. His father and brothers joined with him in quartets, his two brothers Ferdinand and Ignaz played first and second violins, Franz took the viola (it is curious with how many composers, from Mozart to Mendelssohn, this instru-

ment has been the favourite), and his father the violoncello. The year 1813 was his last year at school, for his treble voice breaking he had to leave the Imperial Chapel and the school attached to it. In this year he wrote his first symphony in D, which was performed by the orchestra composed of members of the choir. A large number of songs, already showing the true Schubert style, were also produced about this time. After five years of training he was adrift again, and as he could obtain no other more congenial occupation he was compelled to spend the next three years as his father's assistant, teaching the poor children in the school the alphabet and a little arithmetic. But it is evident that he did not spend more time over this than was absolutely necessary, and a long list of musical compositions is assigned to these years. It is quite possible that his scholars as well as he may have had something to complain of during that time.

Schubert was throughout life exceedingly shy, and in general society was the reverse of brilliant, but he appears to have had rather a talent for forming intimate friendships with other young men, artists like himself. Mayrhofer, a poet, clever and hypochondriacal (who afterwards committed suicide by throwing himself out of a window), many of whose poems Schubert set to music—Schober, an intense admirer of his friend's musical genius, and at whose house Schubert lived for a number of years—Johann Michael Vogl, a celebrated baritone singer, who was of great use in introducing

his songs to the public—Josef Hüttenbrenner, and others, formed an enthusiastic band of kindred spirits, who, over such potations as their scantily filled purses would permit of at the tavern in the evening, used to discuss art, philosophy, and life, probably, like most of such *'coteries*, a good deal inclined to mutual admiration. Some of his finest works were written during these three years of drudgery with the spelling-book and birch rod. His mass in F, which, with the exception of the one written in the last year of his life, is his best, was composed in 1814, and first produced at the centenary festival of his own parish church at Lichtenthal. Schubert himself conducted, and for once in his life must have tasted some of the sweets of triumph. Salieri, his old master, was present, and after the performance embraced him, saying, 'Franz, you are my pupil, and will do me great honour;' and old Schubert, the schoolmaster, was so proud of his son's work that he made him a present of a five-octave piano on the occasion. During the same year, the music of a comic opera, '*Der Teufel's Lustschloss*,' was composed, but of this only the overture and first and third acts remain, as, with the same ill-luck that befell so many others of his compositions, the second act of the unpublished score was afterwards used by an ignorant servant of Josef Hüttenbrenner to light fires with.

The next year, 1815, while still engaged as the parish '*dominie*,' Schubert wrote an almost incredible quantity of music. Two symphonies and six operatic

works, two masses, nearly 150 songs, and a large amount of choral and chamber music were then composed. The operas are hardly known at all, and, indeed, a great part of the score perished by the hands of the indiscriminating domestic of Hüttenbrenner's, together with the one already mentioned. But from the specimens of Schubert's operas which remain to us, it is probable that at no time was his best work to be found in this style of composition. His songs abundantly prove that he was not wanting in the dramatic instinct, but the very spontaneity with which his thoughts flowed was unfavourable to the development of the sense of symmetry in an equal degree, and even his greatest admirers must confess that he frequently laid himself open to the charge of diffuseness, which has tenderly been spoken of by one of them as his 'heavenly length!' Besides this, the librettos that fell in his way were all so terribly dull and stupid, that the only wonder is that Schubert could have put them to music at all. Certainly, it has humorously been said that if he had lived, Schubert would have set the whole German literature to music, so prolific was his imagination, and so facile were his powers of musical expression; but a great musician requires a fitting subject just as much as a great writer or painter, and of Schubert, as of every other true artist, it may be said that the finer his subject the finer his treatment of it.

One day Joseph Spann, a friend of his, happened to

call upon him, and found him in a state of the greatest excitement, muttering wildly to himself and pacing restlessly round the narrow circle of his room. He had been reading Goethe's magnificently weird 'Erl King;' the idea of that terrible night-ride had taken possession of him, and the same day he wrote his now famous setting of the song. It is rather provoking to think that Goethe himself never in the slightest degree acknowledged, or indeed had any idea of, the services which the then obscure Viennese composer rendered him. Schubert had an unbounded veneration for Goethe, and after setting a number of his finer songs to music, he sent these settings to the poet himself. But Goethe did not vouchsafe to take the slightest notice of this offering. It was only late in his life, when Schubert had been a long time dead and buried, that he at all was brought to change his mind. Madame Schröder-Devrient then sang the 'Erl King' to him, and he had to confess its grandeur, saying, 'I once heard this composition in my earlier life, and it did not agree with my views of the subject, but executed as you execute it, the whole becomes a complete picture.' I half suspect that even this was not the whole truth; that a good deal of this speech must be put down to compliment. Goethe's musical tastes were not developed, and like many other people he appreciated a conventionally 'tuny' ballad a great deal more than musical settings like Schubert's, in which all the beauty, mystery, passion, of the poet's words seem to be reproduced in



the diviner sounds of music. Surely, of all the strange reversals that 'the whirligig of time' brings us, this is not the least strange—that many of Goethe's songs are now far better known as of Schubert's setting than as of Goethe's writing!

In 1818 a meeting took place, of which it is hard to say whether it was for his greater happiness or sorrow. The Esterhazy family had long been famous for its patronage of music, a notable instance of which is the twenty-eight years' service of Haydn to Prince Esterhazy as composer and conductor of his orchestra, and once more an Esterhazy was to befriend a musical genius. Count Johann Esterhazy engaged Schubert as teacher of music to his family at the rate of two gulden a lesson, and it was further arranged that Schubert should live with the family in summer at their country-house at Zelesz, in winter with them at Vienna, but this scheme as to living with them seems to have fallen through. There were three children, Maria, aged thirteen, Caroline, aged eleven, and a boy of five years old. The selection of Schubert as teacher was itself a proof of the enlightened musical tastes of the Count and Countess, for, unlike Mozart and Beethoven, he was by no means an extraordinarily clever player. He accompanied his own songs, it is true, with wonderful grace and feeling, but his powers of execution were not remarkable, and he was not himself able to do full justice to some of his finest works. Thus it is said that when once trying to play

his noble fantasia in C at a private party, he broke down in the *finale*, and jumping up said, 'The devil may play such stuff if he likes.' Still his playing must have been that of the great artist, and a passage to be quoted further on will illustrate this. Little is known of his intercourse with the Esterhazy family, and it is uncertain whether he long continued to give lessons; it is probable, however, that he did, for in a letter dated 1824 he mentions paying a visit to the family at Zelesz in Hungary.

Every one has a romance some time or other in his life,—many have more than one; and the romance of Schubert's life is associated with the name of his pupil, Caroline Esterhazy. A child when he first taught her, he watched her grow up into the rare grace and beauty of her womanhood; and there is little wonder that, probably unconsciously, she enslaved the heart of the poor, shy musician. It is one of the penalties—as things go in this world—accompanying great artistic endowments, that the possessor is far more keenly alive than others to the beauty of form and spirit to be met with in the world, while for himself few recognise the spiritual beauty hidden, it may be, beneath an exterior uncouth and unpleasing. Schubert was ugly, and, what was worse, insignificant-looking, with features said to be of vulgar type, and broad, flat nose. He wore spectacles, and was always painfully shy, except with his most intimate friends. One of his friends speaks of his appearance in the reverse of flatter-

ing terms, and says : ' His round and puffy face, low forehead, projecting lips, bushy eyebrows, stumpy nose, and short, curly hair, gave him the look of a negro.' Caroline Esterhazy, the brilliant beauty, had at most only a pitying regard for the poor fellow, and it seems that at times she was inclined to amuse herself a little with his devotion. Once, it is said, she asked him, with pretended concern, why he had never dedicated any of his music to her ; and his answer was, ' What would be the use ? *All* that I do is dedicated to you.' Very pathetically he once wrote : ' My productions in music are the productions of my understanding, and spring from my sorrow. Those only which are the products of pain seem to please the great world the most.' And thus he writes to his friend Kupelweiser :—

' . . . At last I can once more pour out my heart to somebody. You are so good, so honest and true, you will surely forgive me much which others would take great offence at. In one word, I feel myself the most unhappy, the most miserable man on earth. Picture to yourself a man whose health can never be re-established, who from sheer despair makes matters worse instead of better ; picture to yourself, I say, a man whose most brilliant hopes have come to nothing, to whom the happiness of proffered love and friendship is but anguish, whose enthusiasm for the beautiful (an inspired feeling at least) threatens to vanish altogether, and then ask yourself if such a condition does not represent a miserable and unhappy man.

*" Meine Ruh' ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer ;  
Ich finde sie nimmer und nimmermehr."*

I can repeat these lines now every day ; for every night when I go to sleep I hope never again to awake, and every morning renews

afresh the wounds of yesterday. Friendlessly, joylessly, should I drag on my existence, were it not that sometimes my brain reels, and a gleam of the sweet days that are gone shoots across my vision.'

Save in the music that he constantly poured forth, there is little eventful to record in his life for the next few years. A comic opera, 'Die Zwillingenbrüder,' was accepted at the Kärnthnerthor Theatre, and produced with moderate success; but the critics treated it rather contemptuously, as wanting in melody, and written in an old-fashioned style. Another opera, 'Alfonso und Estrella,' to a weak libretto by his friend Schober, was written in 1822. The year before, he wrote his seventh Symphony in E, a work that, though fully sketched out, was, for some reason that cannot now be ascertained, never completed. Yet his memoranda for it are so full, that even now it would be an exceedingly easy task for a competent musician to complete it. At one time Mendelssohn is said to have intended doing this. Mr. Grove, who rediscovered this symphony, says, 'The memoranda are perfectly orderly and intelligible. Every bar is drawn in through the entire work. The *tempi* and names of the instruments are fully written at the beginning of each movement. The very double bars and flourishes are gravely added at the end of each, and "Fine" at the conclusion of the whole; and Schubert evidently regarded the work as complete. And so it practically is, for each subject is given at full length, with a bit of bass or accompani-

ment, or figure, or fugato passage. There is not one bar from beginning to end that does not contain the part of one or more instruments.' Probably no one at the time cared for the work or would produce it, and so it was laid aside and forgotten. His grandest unfinished symphony, however, was that in B minor, commenced in 1823. Of this only two movements are completed, and the work was not performed for many years after his death. It was first produced in Vienna in 1865, and soon afterwards at the Crystal Palace in England, and since then has been frequently performed. All musicians now acknowledge it as one of the grandest and most lovely musical creations of the century.

In the year 1823 Schubert was asked to write the incidental music to a play by Helmine von Chézy, the eccentric and half-mad lady who wrote the stupid libretto of Weber's opera, 'Euryanthe.' The overture, *entr'actes*, and ballet music to the piece, 'Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus,' were written by Schubert; but exquisite as his music was, the piece fell utterly flat, and was only twice performed. The critics again wrote with contemptuous indulgence. One says, 'Herr Schubert shows originality in his music, but, unfortunately, *bizarrerie* also. The young man is in a period of development; we hope he will come out of it successfully. At present he is too much applauded. For the future, may he never complain of being too little recognised.' Every musician now knows and loves the exquisite 'Rosamunde' music; and, even if Mr. Grove

had done nothing else for music, his rescue of the forgotten MSS. from a dusty cupboard at Dr. Schindler's, in Vienna, is enough to entitle him to lasting and grateful remembrance. Two more operas, composed about this time, 'Fierabras' and 'Der Häusliche Krieg,' are very little known. The first was never performed or printed, the second has been occasionally performed; but, like all his other operatic works, though full of melody, is wanting in the dramatic symmetry required for successful stage representation.

Depressed and lonely as he was, as time went on, Schubert found the secret of happiness in himself—in work, by means of which he forgot and was raised far above his troubles. In 1824 he writes to his brother Ferdinand: 'Certainly the happy, joyous time is gone, when every object seemed encircled with a halo of youthful glory; and that which has followed is a miserable reality, which I endeavour, as far as possible, to embellish by the gifts of my fancy (for which I thank God). . . . I am now, much more than formerly, in the way of finding peace and happiness in myself. As a proof of this, I shall show you a grand sonata and variations upon an original theme, which I have lately composed.' His exquisite set of songs, 'Die Schöne Müllerin,' and sonatas, marches, quartets, and many songs, were written during this time of sadness and depression. There is also a strange 'dream story,' found after his death among his papers, alone, without any other writing to give a clew to its meaning. It is

difficult to understand it all, though that it is meant to depict his own life, many touches, as, for instance, the pathetic allusion to his 'Lieder,' appear to indicate. I give it in full, for even apart from its interest as a revelation of the musician's inner life, it seems to me to be a fragment of wonderful beauty, worthy of Novalis or Jean Paul Richter :—

'I was one brother amongst a number of brothers and sisters. Our father, our mother, were worthy people. I was deeply and fondly attached to the whole circle. My father took us out one day on a party of pleasure, to a favourite spot. My brothers were in a state of great glee, but I was wretched. Well, my father came up to me and bade me enjoy the delicacies before me, but I could not. Whereupon my father, in a rage, banished me his presence. I turned away my steps, and with a heart full of boundless love for those who despised it, I wandered into the distant country. For long years I felt myself preyed on alternately by the greatest pain and most fervent love. Then the news of my mother's death was brought to me. I hastened away to see her, and my father, softened by affliction, did not stop my going then. I gazed on the dead body of my mother. My eyes filled with tears. Like the good old past days, to which my departed mother thought we should carry back our memories, as she did in her lifetime, she was lying dead before me. And we followed her poor body with mourning and woe, and the coffin sank into the earth. My father once more took me into his favourite garden; he asked me if I liked it. But the garden was distasteful to me, and I dared not trust myself to say anything. My father, kindling, a second time asked me if I *liked* the garden. I trembled, and said, "No." Then my father struck me, and I fled. A second time I turned my steps away, and, with a heart full of boundless love for those who scorned it, I once more went forth a wanderer in the world. For many, many long years, I sang my "Lieder." If I would fain sing of love, it turned to pain; if I would sing of pain, it turned to love. Thus, I was divided between love and sorrow. And once I was told of a pious maiden who had just

died. A crowd gathered round her tomb, and in the midst of that crowd many youths and old men wandered for ever, as though in bliss. They spoke gently, as though dreading to awake the maiden. Heavenly thoughts seemed, like light sparks, to be for ever darting on the youths from the maiden's grave, and a gentle rustling noise was heard. I felt bashful and ashamed to walk there. "It is by a miracle only," said the people, "that you are conducted to this circle." But I advanced to the grave with slow steps, full of devotion and firm faith, my eyes fixed on the grave, and before I could have thought it possible, I found myself in a circle from which there arose spontaneously a wonderful strain of music, and I felt the bliss of eternity concentrated, as it were, into one moment. I saw, too, my father, reconciled and loving towards me. He clasped me to his arms and wept. But I wept more sorely than he.'

In March 1825, Schubert accompanied his friend Vogl the singer on an excursion through the Tyrol. His letters at this time are full of gaiety. Some of his most beautiful compositions, for example, the Hymn to the Virgin, date from this holiday; and Vogl and he seem to have met appreciative people, to whose delight Schubert, shy as he was, was quite ready to minister by his playing. He writes from one place—

'Some assured me that the keys under my hands sounded like singing voices, which, if it be true, is a delightful compliment, as I cannot endure that execrable hacking, peculiar to even distinguished pianoforte-players. It neither tickles the ears nor moves the feelings.'

A hint for some of our modern *virtuosi*!

From the Tyrol the two friends wandered on to Salzburg, and Schubert in his letters very graphically describes the quaint old town, girt by the glorious mountains. He describes a visit to Michael Haydn's



tomb, but, strangely enough, says nothing of Mozart, though, as we have seen, Mozart was, next to Beethoven, his greatest favourite, and was born and had lived for many years in this town. I must give one more quotation from the diary contained in his letters, dated from Steyer, 21st September :—

‘ . . . After some hours we arrived at Hallein, a remarkable town, but uncommonly dirty and dismal. All the inhabitants look like ghosts, pale, hollow-eyed, and thin enough to make tapers of, or lucifer matches. The horrible contrast of the Ratzenstadt with the other valley made a very fatal impression on my mind. It is as though one fell straight from heaven upon a dung-heap, or listened to something of the immortal A— after a piece of Mozart.’

He goes on to describe the Pass of Lueg thus—

‘ After painfully and slowly crawling over a high mountain, huge mountains before us and on either side of us, so that one might think the world in these parts had been nailed up with boards, one looks down, after having scaled the highest part of the mountain, into a fearful ravine, and then, for the first time, one feels a palpitation of the heart. Recovering a little from the first shock, one sees the mighty ramparts of rock, which, in the distance, seem to shut up like a blind alley, and then one puzzles one’s head in vain thinking where there can possibly be any outlet or passage. Amidst these awful scenes of nature man has sought to perpetuate the memory of his still more dreadful inhuman actions. For here it was where the Bavarians on one side of the Salzach, and the Tyrolese on the other, the river roaring deep between them, inflicted that dreadful murderous slaughter, whilst the Tyrolese, secreted in the holes of the rocks, uttering their hellish cries, fired on the Bavarians, who were striving to win the pass, and fell wounded into the abyss without seeing whence the shots proceeded. This shameful action, which was continued for several days and weeks, they tried to mark by building a chapel on the Bavarian side of the Pass, and erecting a red cross in the rock on the Tyrol-

ese side. These emblems were partly intended as memorials, and partly to appease the wrath of heaven by sacred mementoes. O glorious Christ, how many wicked deeds must Thy sacred image appear to sanction ! Thou Thyself, the cruellest memorial of human guilt, men set up Thy image as though they would say, "Lo ! with insolent feet we have trampled upon the most perfect creation of the great God ; should we feel compunction of heart in annihilating the noxious insect called man ?"

There is an echo of the greatness of his music in these words.

This journey was the last holiday among the mountains that he enjoyed, for though afterwards we find him longing for another tour his pecuniary means did not allow of it. Many as were his pieces that had now been published, he made little profit by them, and he was never successful in obtaining any of the posts as conductor or organist for which he on several occasions applied. Whether the latter failure was his own fault or not it is hard to decide ; but, if a story told by Schindler, Beethoven's biographer (and not the most veracious of men, be it said) is to be believed, it was mainly attributable to his own obstinate opinionativeness. Schindler says, that in 1826 the post of conductor to the Kärnthnerthor Theatre at Vienna was vacant, and that Schubert, strongly supported by his friend Vogl, was a candidate. Some operatic scenes had to be set to music as a proof of the applicants' capacity. This Schubert had done, and Nanette Schechner was to sing the soprano part. 'During the rehearsals,' says Schindler, 'the lady called the attention

of the composer to some insurmountable difficulties in the principal air, and requested him to make curtailments and to simplify the accompaniment, which Schubert flatly refused to do. At the first orchestral rehearsal the artist endeavoured in vain to master the air, and Schubert's friends begged him to make the required modifications, but without result. He persisted in his determination. At the last rehearsal everything went smoothly until the air, when it happened as every one anticipated. The singer struggled hard with the weighty accompaniments, especially with the brass, but was fairly overpowered. She sat down on a chair by the proscenium quite exhausted. No one spoke, and despair was on every countenance. Meanwhile Duport, the manager, went from group to group and whispered mysteriously. As for Schubert he sat motionless during this most unpleasant scene like a statue, his eyes fixed upon the score lying open in front of him. At length Duport advanced to the orchestra, and said very politely, "Herr Schubert, we should like to postpone the performance for a few days, and I must request that you will make the requisite alterations in the aria, so as to render it easier for Fräulein Schechner." Several members of the orchestra now entreated Schubert to yield; but his anger was only intensified by Duport's observations and these added entreaties, and exclaiming in a loud voice, "I alter nothing!" he closed the book with a bang, put it under his arm and strode away quickly. All hope of his appointment was of course

abandoned.' It is only fair to Schubert to mention that Josef Hüttenbrenner, on the contrary, says that the singer was delighted with the air, and that Schubert's failure to obtain the appointment was solely due to intrigues at the theatre.

Not long after this Schubert paid a last visit to Beethoven. He had previously called upon the great master with some of his own compositions, but though Beethoven had received him kindly, Schubert's great nervousness and the awkwardness of writing everything in consequence of Beethoven's deafness, had prevented any close intimacy. We are told, however, that during his last illness Beethoven had perused a number of Schubert's songs with great delight, and had said of him, 'Truly Schubert possesses a spark of the divine fire !' When he heard of his serious illness, Schubert once more mustered up courage to call upon the master whom he venerated so much, and it is said that as the dying man was then unable to speak, Schubert stood for some time in silence beside his bed. And when the funeral took place Schubert was one of the thirty-eight torch-bearers who stood beside the grave. Afterwards he went with two of his friends to the Mehlgrube tavern, and wine was called for three. First they drank to the memory of the great departed genius, and then Schubert called upon his friends to drink to the one who should next be laid in the grave. The glasses were again filled, and Schubert exclaiming, 'Myself !' hastily drained his own and left the place. It may be that already he

knew of the malady that in less than two years was to remove him.

Of these two years, save a few letters written at the time of a pleasant visit to some friends, the Pachlers, at Gratz, almost the only record is in the catalogue of his works, but during this period some of his grandest compositions, the ninth Symphony in C, one of the most glorious conceptions of genius, and though extremely long, worthy to stand by the side of the finest of Beethoven's symphonies, the Mass in E, many of his most beautiful 'Lieder,' the 'Winterreise,' and others, and the exquisite pianoforte *impromptus* were written. He was never able during his life to gain a hearing for his great symphony; but it appears that public interest had by this time to some extent become aroused in his favour, and we hear of a private concert on 26th March 1827, at a Musikverein, where the programme, entirely composed of his own compositions, was exceedingly successful. But already symptoms of the illness destined to be at last fatal were exhibiting themselves—nervous headaches and rush of blood to the head, from which for some time he had occasionally suffered, were now more frequent and affected him more severely, but to the very end he continued working. He had removed to his brother Ferdinand's house, and, this being new and damp, his health was unfavourably affected by the change. But he still was ardently contemplating future work, and indeed, on 3rd November, a few days before his death, he had paid

a visit to Sechter, a learned counterpointist, to arrange for taking lessons from him, although from the fugal writing in his masses we know that Schubert was by no means ignorant of the more scientific part of his art. In connection with this visit there have been some rather curious speculations. The cause which led to it was the perusal of a number of the scores of Handel's works which had fallen into his hands. He said to Anna Fröhlich the singer, 'I now see how very deficient I am in this respect. But it is not too late; I will work hard with Sechter and make up for lost time.' How had these scores of Handel's, very costly volumes, come to him? Some time before, Arnold's complete edition had been sent, in forty volumes, to Beethoven as a present from a London admirer, and Beethoven, on his deathbed, had studied them with the greatest attention and delight, saying, 'He is the greatest of all musicians! I can still learn from him.' After Beethoven's death these books were sold for 104 florins, about £4, 10s., and as the volumes must have been a rarity in Vienna, it is by no means improbable that from the hands of the great composer lately dead they had passed into those of the hardly less gifted one who so soon was to follow him.

A few days after this, he began to complain of weakness and depression; he was not able to take food, and soon could not rise from his bed. But even then he continued his work, he corrected the proofs of his 'Winterreise,' and spoke of seeking another libretto for

an opera. On the 17th he became delirious, and piteously supplicated his brother Ferdinand to help him. 'What is going to happen to me? What are they doing to me?' When his brother and the doctor tried to inspirit him by speaking of his recovery, 'No, no, here is my end!' he said. 'Then horrible fancies came to him; he thought he was being put in the tomb. 'Oh! I entreat you to carry me to my room; don't, don't leave me in this hole in the earth! What! don't I deserve a place above ground?' They tried to assure him that he was indeed in his own room, but his mind was wandering again. In a frenzy he cried out, 'No, no, it's not true; Beethoven is not laid here!' But soon the last remnant of his strength was gone, and very quietly he breathed his last, at three o'clock on the afternoon of 19th November. His illness had only lasted a week.

The next day his friends came to the house and covered his coffin with wreaths, and placed a laurel crown upon his brow. On the 21st the funeral took place in the Währing Churchyard, and Schubert was laid in his last resting-place, only separated by three graves from that of Beethoven. A concert was soon afterwards given by his friends to raise the money to pay for a monument over his grave. Three hundred and sixty florins were realised, and with this sum was erected the monument that may now be seen with the first lines of Franz Grillparzer's poem engraved beneath the name of Schubert, 'Here lies buried a rich treasure, and yet more glorious hopes.'

In these words it seems to me that there lurks something of the indulgent pity that the foolish Viennese *cognoscenti* of the time lavished upon this marvellous composer while he lived. True, the rich treasure is spoken of, though how the treasure that is still a blessing to the world can be buried it is difficult to see, but—‘yet more glorious hopes!’ These words are not more true of Schubert than they would be of any other great composer dying in his prime. Schubert’s greatness does not consist, as Grillparzer and his friends of the Viennese clique probably imagined, in the promise of great things that might have been accomplished in the future. He has left work already done, symphonies, masses, chamber music, sonatas, and, above all, songs of imperishable worth, to which the world has long since accorded an assured place among the noblest of musical classics. But men were very slow to recognise the work of Schubert, the musician-poet, as Liszt calls him. Writing in 1838, this greatest of modern pianists said:—‘In the *salons* I have heard with the keenest pleasure, and often with an emotion bordering on tears, an amateur, the Baron Schörstem (a friend of the Esterhazy family, and always an admirer of Schubert), sing the “Lieder” of Schubert—the musician most truly poet that ever lived!’

Years after his death Schumann discovered his great Symphony in C, dusty and utterly forgotten, at Vienna, and prevailed upon Ferdinand Schubert to send it to Mendelssohn at Leipzig, under whose baton it was first



performed at the Gewandhaus concerts in that city. Other treasures have been since then unearthed from dusty cupboards and old lumber-rooms in Vienna, and Schubert's music is now played and sung everywhere at concerts and in drawing-rooms. Posthumous fame is all very well, but—if he could only have had a little of it while he lived !

Do you remember that exquisite passage, so full of pathetic sadness, that Heine wrote about the *Lüneburg Chronicle* ? ‘We are told,’ he says, ‘that in the year 1480 there were songs piped or sung in Germany sweeter and more lovely than any known before them, and that young and old, and especially the ladies, became quite infatuated about them, so that they were heard singing them from morning to night. These songs, however,’ says the *Chronicle*, ‘were made by a young priest who was infected with leprosy, and kept himself concealed in the wilderness. . . . There he sat mournfully in the wilderness of his misery, while all Germany sang and piped his songs in joy and triumph. The *blasé* King of Judea said rightly, “There is nothing new under the sun.” Perchance the sun itself is a warmed-up joke, which has new sunbeams stitched into it, and now flashes so imposingly. Often in my dismal night-visions I think I see the poor priest of the *Lüneburg Chronicle*, my brother in Apollo, before me, and his suffering eyes gleam strangely and start out from beneath his hood ; but at the same instant he slides off, and dying away like the echo

of a dream, I hear the harsh tones of the Lazarus rattle.'

Is it not true, as another poet has written, that—

*'Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts'?*

Schubert himself said, 'For many many long years I sang my "Lieder." If I would fain sing of love, it turned to pain; if I would sing of pain, it turned to love.' But from the sorrow of that obscure and lonely life has gone forth such music of consolation and gladness as the world can never tire of; from Schubert, the poor neglected musician whom so few knew and cared for while he lived, have come the many songs now piped or sung in Germany, sweeter and more lovely than any known before.







BORN FEBRUARY 29, 1792. DIED NOVEMBER 13, 1868.

## ROSSINI.

*'I know nothing of French music, German music, or Italian music: I know only two kinds of music—good and bad,' said Rossini.*

THE fact that Gioacchino Antonio Rossini was born on the 29th of February in leap year was, apart from the difficulty which he used sometimes jestingly to allude to of computing his age from the paucity of birthdays in his life, not quite as remarkable as another one, namely, that 1792, the year in which he was born, immediately succeeded that in which Mozart died. Rossini, as a writer of operas, was the true successor of Mozart; and if as a musician he cannot rank as high as his predecessor, it was more the fatal facility of production, the easy-going lack of that artistic purpose which regards something more than money-making as the true aim of the composer, rather than the want of innate power that prevented his attaining the highest place. But the composer of 'Il Barbiere,' 'Guillaume Tell,' and the 'Stabat Mater,' will always be remembered.

His father was the town-trumpeter of Pesaro, something like the bellman or town-crier who still goes round

proclaiming sales, meetings, cattle or children lost or strayed, and all sorts of official news, in small provincial towns in England at the present day. But the elder Rossini was, besides this, a man of some real musical accomplishments; he played the horn in small theatrical orchestras, and it is said that he was a man of sufficiently independent political notions to have given dire offence for his outspoken admiration of the French Republic when the French troops occupied Pesaro, for which he was punished by being put in prison by his fellow-townsmen after their retirement. But Signora Rossini also possessed musical talent, and while her husband remained for a time in this enforced seclusion, she appeared on the stage, and having a fine voice, easily obtained engagements in the small provincial theatres in Bologna and elsewhere. Her little son went with her, and very soon also appeared on the boards in children's parts, his lovely voice and extraordinary cleverness winning for him thus early very plentiful applause. The father, released from prison, soon joined the family party, and then they strolled from one place to another, the mother singing as '*prima donna buffa*,' the father playing the first horn, and the boy either singing on the stage, or playing the second horn by his father's side in the orchestra; and this continued from the time he was seven till he was twelve years of age.

During the intervals of this life, Gioacchino had irregular musical lessons given him, and we hear of a Signor Prinetti teaching him the harpsichord; but as that

gentleman's method of playing the scale was with the first finger and thumb only, his pupil cannot have gained much from him, and it is hardly surprising that the boy played such tricks with his master, and mimicked him so outrageously, that as a punishment the little fellow was taken away from him and apprenticed to a blacksmith; but fortunately, moved by his repentance, his parents soon took him to Bologna, and presented him to a Professor Tesei there, a really capable musician, who, soon discovering the boy's talents, not only gave him lessons in singing and pianoforte-playing, but obtained him a position in the church choir, where he could now sing well enough to take the solos, at the modest salary of three paoli a service.

But his mother's voice failed suddenly, and the boy, with the object of assisting the family finances to the utmost, again appeared upon the stage, singing as *Adolfo* in Paer's 'Camilla.' Madame Giorgi-Righetta, afterwards the *Rosina* in 'Il Barbiere,' who sang in this opera, said, 'Nothing could be imagined more tender, more touching, than the voice and action of this extraordinary child in the beautiful canon of the third act, "Senti in si fiero instante."' When, however, his voice in the natural order of things broke, young Rossini retired into private life again, and became a student in counterpoint and the 'cello at the *Liceo* or Conservatoire of Bologna. He little thought when he entered there that some day his name would be inscribed in the place of honour over the chief entrance of this building.



He made more progress in playing than in his scientific studies; he was soon able to take the 'cello part in Haydn's quartets, but he grumbled a great deal against the drudgery of the studies and exercises in harmony imposed upon him by his teacher, Padre Mattei, who appears to have been a bit of a pedant. At last one day when his master, urging him on to greater diligence, remarked that although what he had acquired might be sufficient for a writer of operas, it was not enough for a composer of church music—

'Do you say I know enough to write operas?' he asked.

'Yes, enough for that,' was the answer.

'Then I don't want to learn any more, for operas are all I intend to write,' the practical young genius replied; but in justice to him it must be remembered that it was a serious matter with him just at this time to earn money as quickly as possible to help his parents, and, released from his studies, he could do this by acting as accompanist and teacher.

But at any rate, when he was sixteen years of age, a cantata by him, 'Pianto d'Armonia per la morte d'Orfeo,' the Lament of Harmony over the death of Orpheus, was adjudged the first prize, and publicly performed at the *Liceo*. And about this time he became the conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts at Bologna, and was so fond of producing Mozart's and Haydn's symphonies there, that he gained the nickname of 'Il Tedeschino,' the little German. At these concerts he

conducted Haydn's 'Seasons,' a piece which must have been, with its cheerful flow of melody, very congenial to his taste, and from which he coolly abstracted later on the air of 'Zitti zitti' (certainly made a great deal more of than in the original), for 'Il Barbiere.'

Nothing need be said of the comic operas which Rossini now began to pour forth. Except their titles, none of them are remembered; and the fact is that Rossini, with the business-like method which always distinguished him, used up all the best things in them for his later works. Many an air, chorus, prayer, and overture, now known as part of the greater works of his maturity, had already done duty in very different guise before. Thus in an oratorio, 'Ciro in Babilonia,' was an air, which afterwards figured as a chorus in 'Aureliano in Palmiro,' and when that work was in turn sufficiently forgotten, the same air appeared again as the tenor song in 'Il Barbiere,' 'Ecco ridente il Cielo,' and there it will ever remain, for the world has at last recognised its beauty. I shall have more to say afterwards of these curious purloinings from himself,—be it only remarked, operas then were very different from what they are now. A constant succession of new ones was expected from a manager, and none of the earlier compositions of Rossini were engraved, so that thefts from himself were seldom detected, and really only show the lazy economy of the man.

In this 'Ciro' was a piece which Rossini once told a friend he had written for the *seconda donna*, a lady who

only possessed one good note in her voice. But to utilise this to the utmost, her song was simply a repetition of this one note, while the melody was played by the orchestra, and thus singer and composer were applauded. Mendelssohn once composed an opera which was performed by members of his family, and the difficulty was to provide a part for Hensel, the painter, his brother-in-law, who had not the least idea of music. This was got over by a similar method of a one-note part, but it did not prove so successful as in the other case. Poor Hensel could not even stick to that one note, and all the performers were kept busy trying to get him back to it !

The next story of these early days must be the well-known farcical one of the extraordinary opera he wrote for the San Mosé theatre in Venice. In those days the composer was under a contract to supply so many operas a year to the manager of the theatre, whose place it was to supply him with librettos. As a punishment for his having agreed to write an opera for the Fenice theatre, the manager of the San Mosé gave Rossini a libretto to put to music which was so absurd and weak that Rossini's music would be infallibly thrown away upon it. But the composer, a high-spirited clever young fellow of twenty, was rather a dangerous man to play tricks upon. He had to put the thing to music or else he would have to pay damages. Well and good, he *did* put it to music, and an extraordinary piece it turned out to be. On the

night that 'I due Bruschini, o il figlio per azzardo' was produced, the audience, or at least those not aware of the joke, were astonished by the most peculiar transpositions of the ordinary parts. The soprano sang low, the bass screamed high, the man who could not sing had an elaborate *aria*, the comic man was made to sing a sentimental ditty, and to crown the whole thing, in one part the musicians had to strike the tin shades of the lamps in front of them in unison! But this was too much, and Rossini was glad to make his escape amid a storm of hisses.

But 'Tancredi,' produced at the Fenice theatre in 1813, more than restored him to popular favour. The beautiful overture, with the use made in it of the then novel device of the *crescendo*, prepossessed the audience in favour of the piece, and a perfect 'Tancredi' madness set in. The airs were hummed and sung everywhere, by gondoliers on the canals, by the people in the streets, in the shops, in the churches, and the judges in the law courts had to prohibit 'Mi rivedrai' while the trials were going on. 'Di tanti palpiti,' the air which is even now such a favourite with mezzo-sopranos and contraltos, used to go by the name of the 'Aria di rizzi.' The origin of this was the fact that Rossini was called upon by Madame Malanotte, who took the part of the hero, to write another air in the place of the first one allotted to her, which she did not like, but as this happened on the day before the performance there was not much time to write it in.

However, he promised to provide her with another air. Going home to dinner and giving the order to the servant to 'get the rice ready' (rice was then always a necessary part of Venetian dinners), he sat down and began to think about the new air. Before the rice was brought to table, 'Di tanti palpiti' had been noted down.

Passing over two or three operas brought out in Venice and Milan after this, none of which are now remembered, and the best things in which were absorbed in subsequent works, we come to his engagement in 1815 with Barbaja, the *impresario* of two of the Neapolitan theatres, as musical director, Rossini binding himself to write two operas a year for him, arrange any old works that might be wanted, and generally to look after the music, the pay for this being 200 ducats (about £40) a month, together with a small share of the profits of the gambling-tables, which were carried on in connection with the theatres. Barbaja was a thorough ignoramus as to music, but he was a shrewd and clever business man—having risen from being a waiter in a *caffè*, and through all sorts of occupations more or less respectable, to the influential position of owner of two theatres in Naples, and one in Vienna—he knew talent when he met with it, and accordingly he 'took up' Rossini, and the latter was quite willing to accept his terms, which were much better than any the composer had been able to obtain before. Just before leaving Bologna for Naples, a very characteristic adventure befell him.

Rossini was never very much of a patriot, but either from real enthusiasm for once, or popular compulsion, he had composed a hymn in honour of Italian independence, which, in the ferment of revolutionary feeling just then, became an immense favourite at Bologna. But the Austrian troops entered the town, and Rossini, having to leave for Naples, had to go to the commanding officer to obtain permission to depart. The Austrian happened to be a musical *dilettante*, so Rossini took with him a set of verses very complimentary to the invaders, put to music of his own composition. This the officer looked through and was delighted with. He granted Rossini everything he asked for, and, out of the plenitude of his grace, promised that the composition should be played by the military band that evening. It is needless to say that when it was played Rossini was across the frontier, and that the townspeople, to their astonishment and delight, heard their own Hymn to Liberty thundered out by the bandsmen of the enemy! At Naples, Rossini produced his 'Elisabetha regina d'Inghilterre,' in which Mademoiselle Colbran, then the reigning favourite of the opera, who afterwards was to be his wife, took the principal part. This opera, which had a great success, was admirably cast, but Rossini did not take the trouble to write an overture for it, and the one which before had been used for 'Aureliano in Palmira,' and was afterwards and still is the overture to 'Il Barbiere,' did excellently well as the prelude to this opera.

But notwithstanding his engagements at Naples, Rossini considered that he could do more, so he entered into an engagement to compose two operas for the theatre at Rome, and both of these, 'Torvaldo e Dorliska,' and 'Almaviva,' as it was then called, but afterwards named 'Il Barbiere di Siviglia,' were produced about the same time. Paisiello had already written an opera, which had been very successful, on the subject of Beaumarchais' comedy, and Rossini not only asked Paisiello's permission to treat the same subject, but endeavoured as much as possible to make the scenes and the whole piece of a different pattern. The permission was readily enough granted, but still Paisiello, when the opera was first played, did, it is said, his best to prevent its success.

It is almost impossible to believe that 'Il Barbiere' was written in thirteen days, and yet this appears to be the fact. The contract to write the opera was signed on 26th December 1815, and in this it was stipulated that the piece should be delivered on 20th January, the price being 400 scudi (or £80). Fortunately Rossini and Sterbini, the poet and librettist, lived in the same lodgings, their landlord being Zamboni, the basso singer who was to take the part of Figaro. Neither poet nor musician was troubled with much artistic squeamishness, and their work was the perfection of collaboration. The piece once fixed upon and the arrangement of scenes made, Sterbini began to dash off the verses, and as quickly as he handed them

over, Rossini set them to music—indeed, often the composer was ahead of the poet, and hummed the tune to which the obedient scribbler wrote the words. A number of copyists were in the next room, hard at work writing out the score as Rossini flung it to them. The two authors only took brief intervals of sleep upon the sofa during these thirteen days, and ate and drank with their work before them. And, curiously enough, Rossini even told a friend that all the while he was writing ‘*Il Barbiere*,’ he did not once get shaved himself. The reason was a simple one, according to the philosophically-minded musician :—

‘You see,’ he said, ‘if I had been shaved I must have gone out, and if I had gone out I should not have come back in time.’

The thirteen days really seems to be an established fact. Donizetti, who wrote with even greater facility, and is said to have composed the finest act of ‘*La Favorita*’ in an evening after dinner, when told that Rossini had written ‘*Il Barbiere*’ within this time, remarked, ‘Ah, possibly, but you know he is so lazy!’

Every one knows the story of Rossini’s so-called laziness, though it strikes one as being really a peculiar form of activity—how one day when he was writing in bed, and having finished a duet, let it drop on the floor. Rather than get up to recover it, he wrote another in its place. A friend came in and Rossini asked him to fish for the sheet of paper under the bed. ‘I’ve written



another,' he said; 'just listen and tell me which you think best.' The composer sang the two, and as they both agreed that the first was the best, Rossini, frugally minded, at once turned the second into a trio, then got up, dressed and went out to breakfast with his friend.

But to return to 'Il Barbiere.' The first night was one series of misfortunes, and the performance was a complete *fiasco*. First of all Garcia, who played *Alma-viva*, had chosen to sing as the serenade under *Rosina's* window a Spanish air to his own guitar accompaniment; as he tuned his guitar a string broke, and while he was replacing it the public laughed and hissed. *Don Basilio* in coming on the stage stumbled and fell over a trap that had been left open, and he had to sing his great air, 'La Calunnia,' with a handkerchief to his nose. Only Madame Giorgi-Righetta, young, beautiful, and with a fresh clear voice, was received with applause after 'Quia la voce,' and Rossini, bowing from the orchestra, whispered to her on the stage, 'Oh, natura!' But notwithstanding the transient applause, the opera was not saved; at the beginning of the splendid *finale* a cat gravely walked on the stage and got in the way of everybody—*Figaro* chased it one way, *Bartolo* another, *Basilio* another, and the wretched creature then took refuge in poor *Rosina's* skirts—of course while this was going on, the public found a much more amusing entertainment than in listening to the music. The curtain fell amid a tumult that was *not* applause. The artist in Rossini was up in arms against the indignity

to which his noblest work had been subjected. He shrugged his shoulders and, he alone, applauded. This, naturally enough, did not please the audience, and the next act was performed in the midst of confusion that prevented almost a note being heard. At the end Rossini slipped quietly away, and when shortly afterwards the principal artists, having changed their costumes, went to his house to condole with him, they found he had gone to bed and was—fast asleep!

At the second performance the reception was a more favourable one. The beauties of the music were perceived by the listeners, and soon the opera was listened to with delight not only in Rome, but in almost every theatre in Italy, and passing the Alps, was applauded throughout Europe. Rossini's judgment of it was right, and the world has confirmed the opinion expressed by him on that first night, and, later on, when he remarked to a friend, 'The third act of "Otello," the second act of "Guillaume Tell," and the whole of "Il Barbiere" will perhaps live.'

The next year 'Otello,' the first serious opera written by him—and for this change we are indebted to Mademoiselle Colbran, who appeared as *Desdemona*—was produced at Naples. The very fine music of this work was at first not properly appreciated, and the tragic termination of the piece was so much against the taste of the people, that when it was given in Rome, a happy ending had actually to be invented for it, and the 'Moor' and the 'gentle lady,' his wife, retired at

last to the enjoyment of the domestic felicity they deserved.

Of 'Cenerentola,' which is nothing else than the nursery tale of Cinderella dressed up—containing the famous rondo 'Non piu mesta,' and the air so dear to *buffo* singers, 'Miei Rampolli,'—'La Gazza Ladra,' the plot of which is familiar as having to do with a thievish magpie, and 'Armida,' little need be said, for though containing beautifully melodious music like all Rossini wrote, they have not kept the stage. But his next work of importance, 'Mosé in Egitto,' deserves fuller notice.

'Among other things that can be said in praise of your hero, do not forget that he is an assassin,' a doctor of Naples said to Abbé Carpani, Rossini's biographer. I could cite to you more than forty attacks of nervous fever, or violent convulsions, on the part of young women fond to excess of music, which have no other origin than the prayer of the Hebrews in the third act, with its superb change of key from the minor to the major.'

Like many of Rossini's best things, this 'prayer' (to be the precursor of so many others—for what opera would now be complete without its 'prayer' any more than its ballet?) was an after-thought, and only written to distract attention from the clumsy attempts of the machinists to represent the parting of the waters of the Red Sea. (This scene, by the way, always was a failure. Forty thousand francs were spent in vain at the Opera

in Paris to make a passable scene of it, and in London the real water poured on the stage by no means represented the turbulent billows.) When the piece was about to be revived for the second scene, Tottola the librettist, inspired with a bright idea, rushed one morning into Rossini's room, where he was lying in bed, surrounded by his friends, who had come in as usual to tell him the news. Tottola entered shouting that he had saved the third act, and on Rossini, who had been so worried over it that he did not believe its salvation possible, shaking his head, the poet flourished the verses before him.

Rossini read them and saw how valuable the idea was. 'All right,' he exclaimed, 'I'll get up, and you shall have the music in a quarter of an hour.'

And in ten minutes the 'Prayer of the Israelites,' so grand and perfect an inspiration, was written down. That night the people had come, as before, to laugh at the scene of the crossing of the Red Sea, when, unexpectedly to them, *Mosé* began his solo 'Dal tuo stellato,' which is then taken up by the whole chorus of the people. All became suddenly still in the auditory as the majestic prayer was heard; then came the grand change to the major in the second part, which always produces such an electric effect. The thunders of applause at the end, the people shouting, 'Bello, bello! O, che bello!' can only be imagined by one who knows what the excitable Italian people are capable of.

Again passing over a number of works, most of them

hastily written, the best of which were 'La Donna del Lago,' founded on Sir Walter Scott's 'Lady of the Lake,' and 'Zelmira,' the next event to be mentioned is Rossini's marriage in 1821, at Bologna, to Mademoiselle Isabella Colbran, the *prima donna* of Naples, for whom he had written so many successful parts. She was seven years older than he, and as she possessed a 'delicious villa and revenues of her own in Sicily,' as Zanolini says, it is just possible that worldly motives may have had something to do with the hitherto volatile Rossini submitting to the yoke of matrimony.

Soon after this he started with his wife for Vienna, where they were received with immense enthusiasm, and a perfect Rossini *furore* set in. He paid a visit to Beethoven, whose music Rossini always greatly admired; but the poor Viennese composer was then in very weak health, and the interview was a sad one to his gay young *confrère* from the south.

'Semiramide,' the last of Rossini's Italian operas, and one of the finest of them, was produced at the Fenice in Venice in 1823. 'This,' he said, 'is the only one of my Italian operas that I was able to do a little at my ease; my contract gave me forty days, but I was not forty days in writing it.' But, though well performed, this opera was not much to the liking of the Italians, who thought it heavy and the music uninteresting. The most important result of this verdict was that it made Rossini turn his thoughts to other countries and resolve to visit England and France, the country

where so many of the after years of his life were to be spent.

A commission was given him to write an opera for the King's Theatre in London, for the (then) enormous sum of £240, and Rossini at once accepting it, set out for England, taking Paris on his way. Through the failure of the manager, the opera he had gone to produce was never written. Of his visit to England little need be said, except that he was fêted everywhere, was received with great favour by King George IV. and bandied some rather neat compliments with his Majesty, and made a great deal of money by giving two grand concerts (at one of which the great attraction was to hear him sing, and as he had a beautiful baritone voice, a duet with Mademoiselle Catalani was encored three times) and charging £50 for going to private houses, where Madame Rossini sang and he acted as accompanist. When he crossed the Channel he took the satisfactory sum of £7000 with him as the earnings of five months. This was his only visit to England.

In Paris he accepted the position of director of the Théâtre Italien for eighteen months, at a salary of £800 a year. The appearance in Paris of the famous composer of 'Il Barbiere' created a great sensation. The following is the very vivid account given by Auber, the French composer, of his first meeting with Rossini, as related by M. Jouvin :—' It was at a dinner given by Carafa, in honour of his illustrious compatriot. On rising from the table, the *maestro*, at the request of

his host, went to the piano and sang Figaro's concertino, "Largo al factotum." "I shall never forget the effect produced by his lightning-like execution," said Auber. 'Rossini had a very beautiful baritone voice, and he sang his music with a spirit and nerve which neither Pellegrini, nor Galli, nor Lablache, approached in the same part. As for his art as an accompanist, it was marvellous; it was not on a keyboard, but on an orchestra that the vertiginous hands of the pianist seemed to gallop. When he had finished I looked mechanically at the ivory keys—I fancied I could see them smoking. On arriving at home I felt much inclined to throw my scores into the fire. It will warm them perhaps, I said to myself; besides, what is the use of composing, if one cannot compose like Rossini?' A very graphic description, and the phrase, 'vertiginous hands of the pianist,' is distinctly original.

Rossini's management of the Paris opera was as successful as everything else he undertook. He engaged a number of the best artists then unknown in Paris, produced the works and encouraged the aspirations of young artists like Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, and Hérold, and brought out some of his own operas, 'La Donna del Lago,' 'Zelmira,' 'Semiramide,' and a new one, 'Il viaggio à Reims,' the greater part of which was afterwards incorporated in 'Le Comte Ory.'

At the end of this engagement he was appointed to

two purely sinecure posts, 'Premier Compositeur du Roi,' and 'Inspecteur General du Chant en France,' which were given with the purpose of retaining him in France. And, indeed, it was worth while to retain him there, for, on 3rd August 1829, 'Guillaume Tell,' his masterpiece, was produced at the Académie in Paris. The style of this is entirely different from that of his earlier operas; a noble severe simplicity, so far removed from the florid and merely pretty melodies of his other works, was here first developed, and a dramatic strength and pure artistic thought, little suspected in the gay and flippant Italian composer before, were manifested. Producing such a work at the age of thirty-seven, what might not be expected from a composer who had advanced so far? This was what men thought then, and have thought since, and no sufficing explanation has been ever given of the strange fact that 'Guillaume Tell' was his *last* opera, though he lived nearly forty years longer.

After this he wrote the 'Stabat Mater,' one of the most beautiful works of sacred music extant, and, despite what some critics may say, exhibiting true devotional feeling of a kind; and this was first produced in complete form in 1842, in Paris, with Grisi, Albertazzi, Mario, and Tamburini in the solo parts. Besides this he wrote a 'Messe Solennelle,' first performed in public in 1869, and a number of unimportant piano-forte pieces, most of them with comic titles, such as 'Valse anti-dansante,' 'Etude asthmatique,' 'Echan-



tillon de blague,' but practically Rossini's career as a composer before the world ended with the production of 'Guillaume Tell.'

In 1836 Mendelssohn met him at Hiller's house in Frankfort, and this is how the one musician describes the other :—

'Early yesterday I went to see Hiller, and whom should I find sitting there but Rossini, as large as life, in his best and most amiable mood. I really know few men who can be so amiable and witty as he when he chooses: he kept us laughing incessantly the whole time. I promised that the St. Cecilia Association should sing for him the B minor Mass and some other things of Sebastian Bach's. It will be quite too charming to see Rossini obliged to admire Sebastian Bach; he thinks, however, "different countries, different customs," and is resolved to howl with the wolves. He says he is enchanted with Germany, and when he once gets the list of wines at the Rhine Hotel in the evening, the waiter is obliged to show him his room, or he could never manage to find it. He relates the most laughable and amusing things about Paris, and all the musicians there, as well as of himself and his compositions, and entertains the most profound respect for all the men of the present day—so that you might really believe him if you had no eyes to see his sarcastic face. Intellect, animation, and wit, sparkle in all his features and in every word, and those who do not consider him a genius, ought to hear

him expatiating in this way. and they would change their opinion.'

What made him cease to write? The question has often been asked, but never quite answered. For one thing, the stimulus of necessity was withdrawn; he had become a rich man, somewhat worn out, it may be, by the labours of his earlier life—for thirty-seven operas, however easily written, must count for something—and seeing, as he did, that Meyerbeer and others had become formidable rivals in the public affection, he chose to retire with the honours of 'Guillaume Tell,' his latest and best work.

'When would he compose again?' he was once asked. 'When the Jews have finished their Sabbath,' was the answer; plainly referring, seriously or not, to Meyerbeer and his school. But whatever explanations are given, the impression caused by the account of those latter days of Rossini's life is a sad one. He lived, enjoyed himself among his friends, was noted for his good cheer and the *bon mots* he uttered, and then died, on 13th November 1868, at the age of seventy-six. His funeral was attended by all the musical notabilities of Paris, Patti and Albani singing the *Quis est homo* from the 'Stabat Mater,' and a crowd of the great singers of the day joining in the hymn from 'Mosé.'

Something of the true artist, it seems to me, was wanting in him. As Heine says, 'A windmill might as well say it is not obliged to turn, as a true artist

that he is not obliged to write.' If there is wind it *must* turn, and when it ceases to turn we know the wind has gone down. However this may be, the fact remains that for the last thirty years of his life, Rossini, as a composer, had abdicated,—not an heroic ending to a life that might have been so much greater than it was !





BORN FEBRUARY 3, 1809. DIED NOVEMBER 4, 1847.

## MENDELSSOHN.

*At Offenbach one of the party stayed behind to pay the toll for the rest. 'Is not that,' said the toll-keeper, 'the Mr. Mendelssohn whose music we sing at our society?' 'It is.' 'Then, if you please, I should like to pay the toll for him myself.'* G.

OF composers, whom we learn to know from their music and letters—for these have usually been the two outlets of the musician's nature, by which their real selves have most truly been revealed to the outside world,—there is not one whom we love more than Mendelssohn, or whose society we find more delightful. Everything about him seems so perfect that I confess to occasionally feeling a desire for something petulant and passionately earthly to betray his kindred with ordinary human beings; but then again the eager sympathy with everything beautiful, the keen relish for all the delights of human life, and the *abandon* of affection with which he opened his heart to those whom he loved, show the true and genuine human nature of the man in the common life that he so gladly shared with others. In the ideal purity of his thoughts and character there is something sacred, that, according to the bent of our nature, we either look up to and

reverence afar off, as we do a nobly beautiful and stainless woman, or sneer at and despise as wanting the alloy of brutal roughness or grossness we are inclined to admire in ourselves. Something of narrowness there may have been in his nature, an incapacity for all-round sympathy such as none but the greatest poets possess—for this is one of the feats of imagination that it requires something of the nature of a Shakespeare to compass—as shown in his meagre admiration of Chopin, Berlioz, Schumann; but for those who so persistently depreciate Mendelssohn at the present day I feel inclined to return them a little of their own abuse, and, even though Wagner be of their number, say, You are stupidly insulting music when you assail him. Refined and beautiful, pure with the strength of noble thoughts, so full of exquisite grace, so *spirituel* (as Rossini happily described it) in all even his slightest work, sublime in his greatest, the music of Mendelssohn will never cease to delight and bless those to whom music appeals with a voice as from the heavens.

Mendelssohn's lot in life was strikingly different from that of all the musicians of whom I have hitherto written; he never knew, like Schubert, what grinding poverty was, or suffered the long worries that Mozart had to endure for lack of money. His father was a Jewish banker in Berlin, the son of Moses Mendelssohn, a philosopher whose writings had already made the name celebrated throughout Europe. The composer's father used to say with a very natural pride, after his

own son had grown up, 'Formerly I was the son of my father, and now I am the father of my son !'

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was born on the 3rd of February 1809. His parents were neither of them trained musicians, though both appreciated and loved music, and it was from his mother that young Felix received his first music-lessons. When he had made some advance Ludwig Berger became his tutor for the piano, and Zelter, a very learned and severe theorist, for counterpoint. At the age of nine years Felix had attained such proficiency that we find him taking the pianoforte part in a trio at a public concert of a Herr Gugel's, and when twelve years old he began to compose, and actually wrote a trio, some sonatas, a cantata, and several organ pieces. His home life was in the highest degree favourable to his musical development. On alternate Sundays musical performances were regularly given with a small orchestra in the large dining-room, Felix, or his sister Fanny, who also possessed remarkable musical gifts, taking the pianoforte part, and new compositions by Felix were always included in the programme. Many friends, musicians and others, used to be present, Zelter regularly amongst their number, and the pieces were always freely commented on, Felix receiving then, as indeed he did all his life, the criticisms expressed with the utmost good-natured readiness.

In 1824 Moscheles, at that time a celebrated pianist, and residing in London, visited Berlin, and was asked



to give Felix music-lessons. This is the testimony of Moscheles, an excellent and kind-hearted man, and a thoroughly skilled musician, after spending nearly every day for six weeks with the family : ' It is a family such as I have never known before ; Felix a mature artist, and yet but fifteen ; Fanny, extraordinarily gifted, playing Bach's fugues by heart and with astonishing correctness—in fact, a thorough musician. The parents give me the impression of people of the highest cultivation ;' and on the subject of lessons he says, ' Felix has no need of lessons ; if he wishes to take a hint from me as to anything new he can easily do so.' But it is very pleasant to find Mendelssohn afterwards referring to these lessons as having urged him on to enthusiasm, and, in the days in London when his own fame had far outstripped that of the older musician, acknowledging himself as ' Moscheles's pupil.' The elder Mendelssohn was by no means carried away by the applause which the boy's playing and compositions had gained, and in 1825 he took his son to Paris to obtain Cherubini's opinion as to his musical abilities with a view to the choice of a profession, for he had by no means made up his mind that Felix should spend his whole life as a musician. However, the surly old Florentine, who was not always civil or appreciative of budding genius (*teste* Berlioz) gave a decidedly favourable judgment on the compositions submitted to him, and urged the father to devote his son to a musical career. And indeed in listening to the pieces which were dated this year,

especially a beautiful quartet in B minor, an octet for strings, the music to an opera in two acts, 'Camacho's Wedding,' and numerous pianoforte pieces, it is difficult to realise that the composer was then only sixteen years of age, or that any one could question the artistic vocation that claimed him. But the next year a work was written, the score of which is marked 'Berlin, August 6, 1826,' when it must be remembered that he was seventeen years of age, which of itself was sufficient to rank him among the immortals—the overture to the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' Full of lovely imaginings, with a wonderful fairy grace all its own, and a bewitching beauty revealing not only the soul of the true poet, but also the musician's, profoundly skilled in all the art of orchestral effect, it is hard to believe that it is the work of a boy under twenty, written in the bright summer days of 1826 in his father's garden at Berlin.

Passing over the intermediate years with a simple reference to the 'Meeresstille,' 'Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage,' which was then composed, and a fine performance of Bach's Passion Music, for which he had been long drilling the members of the Berlin Singakademie, the next event is a visit to England in 1829, where he was received with extraordinary warmth, playing at the Philharmonic Concerts, conducting his C minor Symphony, which he dedicated to the Philharmonic Society, they in their turn electing him one of their honorary members; going to dinners, balls, and the House of Commons, and enjoying himself most hugely. His

letters from England at this time are brimming over with fun and graphic description ; there is one especially amusing, in which he describes himself with two friends going home from a late dinner at the German Ambassador's, and on the way buying three German sausages, going down a quiet street to devour them, with all the while joyous laughter and snatches of part songs. There is also a little incident of this time showing the wonderful memory he possessed. After a concert on Midsummer Night, when the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' had very appropriately been played, it was found that the score had been lost in a hackney coach as the party were returning to Mr. Attwood's. 'Never mind,' said Mendelssohn, 'I will make another,' which he did, and on comparison with the separate parts not a single difference was found in it.

From London he went with his friend Klingemann for a tour in Scotland, the story of which is so vividly told in the charming collection of his letters which have been published. They visited Holyrood Palace, and the chapel with the altar where Queen Mary was crowned, 'open to the sky, and surrounded with grass and weeds and ivy, and everything ruined and decayed ; and I think,' he says, 'that I found there the beginning of my Scotch symphony.' From Edinburgh they went north to Fort-William and Tobermory, visited Fingal's Cave, from whence came the wonderful 'Hebrides' or Fingal's Cave Overture—(On his return to Berlin his sisters had asked him to tell them

about Fingal's Cave. 'It cannot be told, only played, he said, and then sat down to the piano and *played* a picture of it)—then turned south, came to Liverpool, intending to go over to Ireland, but were driven back by stress of weather. Of a short visit paid at this time to Coed-du, near Mold, in Wales, a pleasant letter of reminiscences by a Miss Taylor is given by Mr. Grove in his admirable biography, and from it I must extract one passage, which strikes me as very charmingly written:—

'Mr. Mendelssohn was not a bit "sentimental," though he had so much sentiment. Nobody enjoyed fun more than he, and his company was the most joyous that could be. One evening in hot summer we stayed in the wood above our house later than usual. We had been building a house of fir branches in Susan's garden up in the wood. We made a fire, a little way off it, in a thicket among the trees, Mendelssohn helping with the utmost zeal, dragging up more and more wood: we tired ourselves with our merry work; we sat down round our fire, the smoke went off, the ashes were glowing, it began to get dark, but we did not like to leave our bonfire. "If we had some music!" Mendelssohn said; "Could any one get something to play on?" Then my brother recollected that we were near the gardener's cottage, and that the gardener had a fiddle. Off rushed our boys to get the fiddle. When it came, it was the wretchedest thing in the world, and it had only one string. Mendelssohn took the instrument in his hands and fell into fits of laughter over it when he heard the sounds it made. His laughter was very catching, he put us all into peals of merriment. But he, somehow, afterwards brought beautiful music out of the poor old fiddle, and we sat listening to one strain after another till the darkness sent us home.'

Is not that a charming picture?

At the beginning of December he was at home again, and that winter he wrote the 'Reformation Symphony,' intended to be produced at the tercentenary festival of

the Augsburg Confession in the following June. This symphony, with which Mendelssohn was not entirely satisfied, was only once performed during his lifetime, but since his death it has frequently been performed, and though not one of his most perfect works, is recognised as a noble monument in honour of a great event. The next spring he again set out on his travels, this time southwards to Italy.

Of his adventures by the way, of the life in Rome, at Naples, a visit to the island of Capri, his pedestrian tour in Switzerland, his stay in Milan (where he met Herr Mozart, son of *the* Mozart, and delighted him by playing the 'Don Giovanni' and 'Flauto Magico' overtures of his father's), of Munich and Paris—are they not written in that pleasantest of all books, his 'Letters from Italy and Switzerland'? They are only to be compared with Berlioz's letters from Italy, which are perhaps more brilliant, but are wanting in the gentle humour and the unlaboured natural style in which he tells of cathedrals, mountains, organs, and human beings. Here is a clever little 'bit' from one of his letters afterwards to his sister Fanny, then travelling in Italy, dealing with some of the pleasant reminiscences of this time, 'When there is a storm at Chiaramonte and the grey sea is foaming, think of me. . . . Never be so delighted as to agitate yourself. Be wonderfully haughty and arrogant, all the beauty is there for you only! Eat as a salad broccoli with ham, and write to me if it is not capital. So far my good advice. Enough for to-day.' In one

thing I think his judgment may have been too hard ; he is very severe on the French and German artists at Rome. Even in describing a quiet evening walk with Madame Verner and her daughter on the Pincio he cannot forbear an unkind cut at them. He says, 'The background is formed by haggard painters with terrific beards ; they smoke tobacco on the Monte Pincio, whistle to their huge dogs, and enjoy the sunset in their own way.' And again, speaking of them in their own quarters, 'The painters are most formidable to look at sitting in their *Caffè Greco*. I scarcely ever go, for I dislike both them and their favourite places of resort. . . . A neckcloth or a coat would be quite innovations. Any portion of the face visible through the beard is hid by spectacles : so they drink coffee and talk of Titian and Pordenone just as if they were sitting beside them, and also wore beards and wide-awakes.'

Certainly it would be hard to imagine the elegant Mendelssohn cordially fraternising with Berlioz and his dishevelled crew, but I should have liked him all the better if he could have done so, and I don't think his music would have been the worse for it.

Two of the most interesting of these letters are on the subject of the services in Holy Week at St. Peter's, and in one to Zelter he gives a marvellously detailed description, with long musical extracts, of the famous music of which no copies are allowed to be circulated. Mendelssohn says, 'It was almost dark in the chapel

when the Miserere commenced. I clambered up a tall ladder standing there by chance, and so I had the whole chapel crowded with people and the kneeling Pope and his cardinals and the music beneath me. It had a splendid effect.'

One more extract must suffice. He called upon Madame Ertmann, an old lady, at Milan, remembering that it was to her that Beethoven's A minor Sonata was dedicated, and she delighted him with her admirable playing of the great master's work. No less must she have been delighted with the marvellous musical gifts of the youth who had come to her in the name of Beethoven. He says, 'The following day, when I went there again to play her the Symphony in C minor, she insisted on my taking my coat off, as the day was so hot. In the intervals of our music she related the most interesting anecdotes of Beethoven, and that when she was playing to him in the evening he not unfrequently used the snuffers as a toothpick! She told me that when she lost her last child, Beethoven at first shrank from coming to her house; but at length he invited her to visit him, and when she arrived she found him seated at the piano, and simply saying, "Let us speak to each other by music," he played on for more than an hour, and as she expressed it, "he said much to me, and at last gave me consolation."'

After a short visit to England, in which he arranged with Messrs. Novello for the publication of the first book of the 'Songs without Words' (the first idea was

to name them simply 'Original Melodies'), he returned to Berlin, and soon afterwards we find the fruit of a commission from the London Philharmonic Society to compose 'a symphony, an overture, and a vocal piece,' offering one hundred guineas for the exclusive right of performance for two years, in the production of that symphony of undying beauty, 'The Italian,' in A minor. This with the 'Meeresstille' and 'Trumpet Overture' he offered to the Society. When one remembers what this Philharmonic Society has done in conferring honour upon our country by the commissions given to Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and other great composers, it would indeed be a scandal and a shame if now, as has been threatened, in its old age, it should be allowed to perish for want of support.

In 1833 Mendelssohn accepted an official post offered him by the authorities of Düsseldorf, by which the entire musical arrangements of the town, church, theatre, and singing societies were put under his care, Immermann, the celebrated poet, being associated with him in the direction of the theatre. Things, however, did not go on very smoothly there. Mendelssohn found all the many worries of theatrical management—the engagement of singers and musicians, the dissensions to be arranged, the many tastes to be conciliated—too irksome, and he did not long retain this appointment; but the life among his friends at Düsseldorf was most delightful, and the letters written at this time are exceedingly lively and gay. It was here that he received the commission



from the Cæcilia-Vereln of Frankfort for, and commenced, his grand oratorio 'St. Paul.' The words for this, as also for the 'Elijah' and 'Hymn of Praise' afterwards, he selected himself with the help of his friend Schubring, and they are entirely from the Bible,—as he said, 'The Bible is always the best of all.' Circumstances prevented the oratorio being then produced at Frankfort, and the first public performance took place at the Lower Rhine Festival at Düsseldorf in May 1836.

But his visits to Frankfort had a very important result in another way. Mendelssohn there met Mademoiselle Cécile Jeanrenaud, the daughter of a pastor of the French Reformed Church, and, though he had frequently indulged in the admiration of beautiful and clever women,—which is allowable, and indeed an absolute necessity for a poet!—now for the first time he fell furiously in plain unmistakeable and downright love. But it is more characteristic of the staid Teuton than the impulsive musician, that before plighting his troth to her he went away for a month's bathing at Scheveningen in Holland, for the purpose of testing the strength of his affection by this absence. On his return, finding his amatory pulse still beating satisfactorily, he proposed to the young lady, and, as it must be presumed that she had already made up her own mind without any testing, he was accepted. On March 28, 1837, they were married, and the wedded life that then began was one of pure unclouded happi-

ness to the very end. Cécile Mendelssohn was a beautiful, gentle-hearted, and loving wife, just the one to give a weary and nervous artist in the home-life, with herself and the children near him, the blessed solace of rest and calm that he so needed. It is thus that Edward Devrient, the great German actor, and one of Mendelssohn's most intimate friends, describes her: 'Cécile was one of those sweet womanly natures whose gentle simplicity, whose mere presence, soothed and pleased. She was slight, with features of striking beauty and delicacy; her hair was between brown and gold, but the transcendent lustre of her great blue eyes, and the brilliant roses of her cheeks were sad harbingers of early death. She spoke little, and never with animation, in a low soft voice. Shakespeare's words, "My gracious silence," applied to her no less than to the wife of Coriolanus.'

After giving up his official position at Düsseldorf in 1835, Mendelssohn was invited to become the conductor of the now famous Gewandhaus Concerts at Leipzig, a post which he gladly accepted, and, retained by him for many years, was to be one of the greatest delights of his artistic life. Not only was he loved and appreciated in Leipzig—far more than in Berlin, his own city—but he had here an opportunity of assisting many composers and *virtuosi*, who otherwise would have sought in vain for a hearing. Thus, after Liszt, when visiting the town, had been first of all received with great coldness owing to the usual prices

of admission to the concerts having been raised, Mendelssohn set everything straight by having a soirée in his honour at the Gewandhaus, where there were 350 people, orchestra, chorus, punch, pastry, Meeresstille, Psalm, Bach's Triple Concerto, choruses from St. Paul, Fantasia on Lucia, the Erl King, the Devil and his Grandmother,' the latter probably a mild satirical reference to Liszt's stormy and often incoherent playing. It is also pleasant to find how cordially Mendelssohn received Berlioz there, as told in the 'Memoirs' of the latter, spending ungrudgingly long days in aiding in rehearsals for his 'Romeo et Juliette,' though Mendelssohn never sympathised much with Berlioz's eccentric muse.

The 'Lobgesang,' or 'Hymn of Praise,' a 'Symphonie-Cantata,' as he called it, was his next great work, composed in 1840, together with other music, at the request of the Leipzig Town-Council, for a festival held in that town in commemoration of the invention of printing, on 25th June. None who have heard this work can forget the first impression produced when the grand instrumental movements with which it commences are merged in the majestic chorus, 'All men, all things, praise ye the Lord,' or the intensely dramatic effect of the repeated tenor cry, 'Watchman, will the night soon pass?' answered at last by the clear soprano message of glad tidings, 'The night is departing, the day is at hand!' This 'watchman' episode was added some time afterwards, and, as he told a

friend, was suggested to the composer during the weary hours of a long sleepless night, when the words, 'Will the night soon pass?' again and again seemed to be repeated to him. But a greater work even than this was now in progress; the 'Elijah' had been begun.

In 1841 began a troublesome and harassing connection with Berlin, a city where, except in his home-life, Mendelssohn never seems to have been very fortunate. At the urgent entreaty of the king he went to reside there as head of the new Musical Academy. But disagreements arose, and he did not long take an active part in the management. The king, however, was very anxious to retain his services, and a sort of general office seems to have been created for him, the duties of which were to supply music for any dramatic works which the king took it into his head to have so embellished. And, though it is to this that we owe the noble 'Antigone,' 'Œdipus,' 'Athalie,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and other music, this work to dictation was very worrying, and one cannot think without impatience of the annoyances to which he was subjected. The king could not understand why he shrank from writing music to the choruses of Æschylus's 'Eumenides.' Other composers would do it by the yard, why not he?

His one relief seems to have been to run over to Leipzig, and there at his beloved concerts hear his 'Antigone' music, his new 'Scotch Symphony' (completed January 20, 1842), played by the artists who,

unlike those at Berlin, loved his music and were all his friends. Another, the seventh, visit was paid by him in 1842 to London, where he conducted the Scotch Symphony at the Philharmonic Society's Concert amid tremendous applause, and was entertained by the directors at a fish dinner at Greenwich, where Mendelssohn, as he always did on such festive occasions, immensely enjoyed himself. During his stay in England he paid two visits to the Queen at Buckingham Palace, the account of which is so charmingly given in one of his letters to his mother that I must transcribe it:—

‘Prince Albert had asked me to go to him on Saturday at two o’clock, so that I might try his organ before I left England. I found him alone, and as we were talking away the Queen came in, also alone, in a simple morning dress. She said she was obliged to leave for Claremont in an hour, and then suddenly interrupting herself, exclaimed, “But, goodness, what a confusion!” for the wind had littered the whole room, and even the pedals of the organ (which, by the way, made a very pretty feature in the room), with leaves of music from a large portfolio that lay open. As she spoke she knelt down and began picking up the music; Prince Albert helped, and I was not idle. Then Prince Albert proceeded to explain the stops to me, and she said that she would meanwhile put things straight. I begged that the prince would first play me something, so that, as I said, I might boast about it in Germany, and he played a chorale by heart, with the

pedals, so charmingly and clearly and correctly that it would have done credit to any professional, and the Queen having finished her work came and sat by him, and listened and looked pleased. Then it was my turn, and I began my chorus from St. Paul, "How lovely are the messengers." Before I got to the end of the first verse they both joined in the chorus, and all the time the Prince managed the stops for me so cleverly.' Then Mendelssohn asked the Queen to sing one of his songs. 'If I would give her plenty of help she would gladly try, she said, and then she sang the Pilgerspruch "Lass dich nur" really quite faultlessly, and with charming feeling and expression. I thought to myself one must not pay too many compliments on such an occasion, so I merely thanked her a great many times, upon which she said, "Oh, if only I had not been so frightened; generally I have such long breath. Indeed I can sing much better—ask Lablache if I cannot—but I was frightened." ' Then Prince Albert sang, and afterwards they pressed Mendelssohn to improvise. 'If everything had gone as usual I ought to have improvised dreadfully badly, for it is almost always so with me when I want it to go well, and then I should have gone away vexed with the whole morning. But just as if I were to keep nothing but the pleasantest, most charming recollection of it, I never did better; I was in the best mood for it, and played a long time, and enjoyed it myself, so that besides the two themes I brought in the song that the

Queen had sung naturally enough, and they followed me with so much attention and intelligence that I felt more at my ease than I ever did in improvising to an audience. She said several times she hoped I would soon come to England again and pay them a visit, and then I took leave. I went off in the rain to the Klingemanns', and had the double pleasure of pouring out all my news to them and to Cécile. It was a happy morning.'

Passing rapidly over the intervening years filled with busy work, both in composition and as one of the principals of a newly started Conservatorium in Leipzig, we come to 1846, when his great work 'Elijah' was at last completed and performed. On 26th August, at the Birmingham Festival, the performance went splendidly. Staudigl took the part of the prophet, and a young tenor, Lockey, sang the air, 'Then shall the righteous,' in the last part, as Mendelssohn says, 'so very beautifully, that I was obliged to collect myself to prevent my being overcome, and to enable me to beat time steadily.' Rarely, indeed, has a composer so truly realised his own conception as Mendelssohn did in the great tone-picture which he drew of the Prophet of Carmel and the wilderness.

'I figured to myself,' he says, 'Elijah as a grand, mighty prophet, such as might again re-appear in our own day, energetic and zealous, stern, wrathful, and gloomy, a striking contrast to the court myrmidons and popular rabble—in fact, in opposition to the whole

world, and yet borne on angels' wings !' Nothing can be finer than this, with that exquisite touch in the last words, '*in opposition to the whole world, and yet borne on angels' wings.*'

After returning to Germany he was soon busily employed in re-casting some portions of 'Elijah' with which he was not satisfied ; he had also another oratorio on even a grander scale, 'Christus,' already commenced, and at last, after all his lifelong seeking in vain for a good libretto for an opera, he had begun to set one written by Geibel, the German poet, 'Loreley,' to music. But his friends now noticed how worn and weary he used oftentimes to look, and how strangely irritable he frequently was, and there can hardly be a doubt that some form of the cerebral disease from which his father and several of his relations had died, was already, deep-seated and obscure, disquieting him. The sudden announcement of the death of his sister Fanny Hensel, herself a musical genius, to whom he was very fondly attached, on his return to Frankfort from his last visit to England in May 1847, terribly affected him. He fell to the ground with a loud shriek, and it was long before he recovered consciousness.

Indeed, it may be said that he never really recovered from this shock. In the summer he went with his wife and children, and in company with his brother Paul and his family, on a tour in Switzerland, where he hoped that complete idleness as regards music, life in the open air, sketching, and intercourse with chosen friends



might once more give strength to his enfeebled nerves. And for a time the beauty of the mountains and the lakes seemed to bring him rest, and again he began to work at his oratorio "Christus;" but still his friends continued anxious about him. He looked broken down and aged, a constant agitation seemed to possess him, and the least thing would often strangely affect and upset him.

In September he returned to Leipzig; he was then more cheerful, and able to talk about music and to write, although he could not resume the conductorship of the Gewandhaus Concerts. He again had projects in view. Jenny Lind was to sing in his 'Elijah' at Vienna, whither he would go and conduct, and he was about to publish some new songs. One day in October he went to call upon his friend Madame Frege, a gifted lady, who, he said, sang his songs better than any one else, to consult her about some new songs. She sang them over to him several times, and then, as it was getting dark, she went out of the room for a few minutes to order lights. When she returned he was lying on the sofa, shivering with cold, and in agonising pain. Leeches were applied, and he partially recovered, but another attack followed, and this was the last. Devrient thus describes the end:—

'On the 3rd, Felix had spoken cheerfully with his brother for hours until mid-day, then he became restless, and Paul and Cécile were in alternate attendance at his bedside. Towards two o'clock Cécile came

in terror to call Paul, as she could not soothe the patient. Paul went in to him, scolded him in jest, which Felix was yet able to understand and respond to. But suddenly he started up as though seized with a frightful pain in his head, his mouth open with an agonising expression ; he gave one piercing cry and sank back upon his pillow. Now all was over. From this time he lay in a dull half-sleep, answered only "yes" and "no," and only once to Cécile's tender inquiry how he felt, answered, "Tired, very tired!" Thus he dozed quietly until twenty-four minutes past nine, when his breathing ceased, and life was extinct. . . . Hensel, whom I again met now, and who was still quite crushed by the death of his wife, led me to the corpse which he had thoughtfully decorated. There lay my beloved friend, in a costly coffin, upon cushions of satin, embowered in tall growing shrubs, and covered with wreaths of flowers and laurels. He looked much aged, but recalled to me the expression of the boy as I had first seen him. Where my hand had so often stroked the long brown locks and the burning brow, I now touched the marble forehead of the dead.'

The funeral service took place on 7th November in the Pauliner Church at Leipzig. The band preceding the hearse played the solemn funeral march in E minor (Book 5, No. 3) from his Songs without Words, hastily scored by Moscheles, and the chorale 'To Thee, O Lord ;' and the chorus from St. Paul, 'Happy and blest,' with the concluding chorus of Bach's Passion, were

sung in the church. The coffin was then taken to Berlin and buried in the family vault there.

Mendelssohn was of middle height, slim, well proportioned, and of very muscular frame. He was an excellent swimmer, gymnast, and dancer. His features were of decidedly Oriental type, his forehead high, but depressed about the temples, and his large dark eyes, as Devrient describes them, 'with drooping lids, and a peculiar veiled glance through the lashes,' were singularly beautiful and expressive. He was exceedingly excitable, but he possessed one invaluable quality that preserved him against many of the evil effects that otherwise might have resulted from this temperament. He could go to sleep almost at a minute's notice, and he used to say that if he was in a room alone, and found a sofa unoccupied there, he could instantly fall asleep. None of the portraits which have been taken of him succeed in giving more than a faint sketch of the outlined features, for in few men has the spirit within, the real self, that looks out through eyes and face and bodily presentment with ceaselessly changing aspect, so completely baffled the hand of the cunning limner attempting to depict it.





BORN MARCH 1, 1809. DIED OCTOBER 17, 1849.

## CHOPIN.

*Few understood him—did these few understand him aright ?*

LISZT.

THE music of Chopin, as the noblest expression of the refined romantic spirit of modern music, stands alone. True, his range was limited, and he wrote hardly anything but music in dance measures, nocturnes, preludes, and études ; but it is not too much to say, that in his hands the familiar forms became changed, infused with a new life of classic beauty, and a strange *spirituel* charm unknown before. His life was like his music—it might have been so much nobler and greater, and yet it was so beautiful, and full of a pathos of its own, like that of our own English Shelley !—as he himself once said (though he could not measure the greatness of all that he actually achieved), ‘It was only an episode, without a beginning, and with a sad end.’

Though Polish life and music were from first to last such an integral part of Chopin’s existence, it was only on one side, his mother’s, that he could boast of Polish blood, for his father, Nicholas Chopin, was a French-

man, born at Nancy, in Lorraine, who when a young man had gone as a tutor to Warsaw, where, with but few absences, he remained to the end of his life, prosperous and honoured as one of the most accomplished and upright of the professors in the Academy there. Frederic François Chopin was born on 1st March 1809, at Zela Zowa Wola, a little village near Warsaw, where Count Skarbek, in whose house Nicholas Chopin was tutor, then resided.

The child very early showed his sensitiveness to music, and prevailed upon his parents to allow him to share the lessons given to his eldest sister by Albert Zwyny, an excellent music-master in Warsaw. Many are the tales of his performances as a child, but, perhaps, the best is the one related by Karasowski, his biographer, of his appearance at a public concert for the benefit of the poor, when he was not quite nine years old. He was announced to play Gyrowetz's pianoforte concerto, and, a few hours before, he was put on a chair, and there dressed with more than ordinary care, being arrayed in a new jacket, with an ornamented collar, specially ordered for the occasion. When the concert was over, and Frederic returned to his mother, who had not been present, she asked him what the public liked best. 'Oh, mamma, everybody looked only at my collar!' He evidently did not think of his playing as having astonished people so much. Soon after this, when Madame Catalani, the celebrated singer, passed through Warsaw she heard him play, and

presented the child with a watch, bearing the inscription, 'Donné par Madame Catalani à Frédéric Chopin, âgé de dix ans.'

The Grand Duke Constantine, a man of harsh and brutal temper, was then governor of Poland, and in the drawing-room of the Grand Duchess, a beautiful but very unhappy lady, the boy became a great favourite for his marvellous improvisation. He also composed a march, with which the Grand Duke was greatly pleased, ordering it to be scored and frequently played at the military parade. The Grand Duke used to notice how Chopin when playing never looked at his hands, but dreamily gazed towards the ceiling. 'Why do you always look upwards, boy? Do you see notes up there?' he asked.

One more, and a very characteristic story of those early days, may be told before we pass on to the later days, that were serious and sad enough, God knows. Little Frederic could do almost anything he liked with the piano, and all his life, when in happy moods, he was fond of weaving fanciful fairy tales and romances in music, that the listeners were able to follow and to understand by the mere tones alone. One evening his father was away, and there arose a tremendous hubbub among the pupils, which Barcinski, the assistant-master, was quite powerless to quell. But fortunately Frederic came in in the midst of it. Seeing how things were, he good-naturedly sat down to the piano, and calling the other boys round him, promised, if they kept quite still,



to tell them a new and most thrilling story on the piano. This at once quieted them ; Frederic extinguished all the lights (we shall see further on he was all his life fond of playing in the dark), and then he sat down to the piano and began his story. He described robbers coming to a house, putting ladders to the windows, and then frightened by a noise, rushing away into the woods. They go on and on, deeper and deeper into the wild recesses of the forest, and then they lie down under the trees, and soon fall off to sleep. He went on playing more and more softly, until he found that the sleep was not only in his story, but had overcome all his listeners. On this he crept out noiselessly to tell his mother and sisters what had happened, and then went back with them to the room with a light. Every one of the boys was fast asleep. Frederic returned to the piano, struck some noisy chords ; the enchantment was over, and all the sleepers were rubbing their eyes, and wondering what was the matter !<sup>48</sup>

In 1825 his first printed work, a Rondo, dedicated to Madame von Linde, a very accomplished pianist, and a close friend of the Chopin family, was published.

Like Mendelssohn's, Chopin's early life was essentially a home-life. His father and mother and two sisters were his dearest companions ; he had no happiness that was not shared by them, and the atmosphere of tender love and fostering care in which he then lived was the best possible preparation for the struggles of manhood before him. But although he had the cleverest

teachers in Poland, and especially Elsner, a learned theorist, to whom throughout his life he always confessed his indebtedness, it was necessary that he should travel and study art at the great centres of European life, and especially in Italy, where, by the way, a chain of unexpected circumstances prevented him after all arriving. His first journey was a short one in 1828, in company with Professor Jarocki, a learned naturalist, to Berlin, and nothing can be more charming than the *naïve*, simple-hearted, and clever letters which at this time—and indeed during his other travels—he addressed to his ‘dear ones,’ as he calls them, at home. Unfortunately the later part of his correspondence, ranging over eighteen years, was destroyed a few years ago at Warsaw, together with his piano, under circumstances to be described at the close of this sketch. He enjoyed himself immensely at Berlin, hearing operas and oratorios, being ‘quite carried away,’ as he says, by Handel’s ‘Ode on St. Cecilia’s Day,’ and comporting himself very modestly among the *savants* assembled at the congress to which Jarocki took him. Here is a wayside adventure on the return journey, as told by his biographer:—

At the little town of Züllichau, finding they had an hour to wait for horses, Professor Jarocki proposed a walk through the place. This did not take long, and as the horses were not ready when they returned, the professor sat down to a meal—the post-house being also a restaurant—but Frederic, as if drawn by a magnet,

went into the next room and saw—oh, wonder of wonders! a grand piano. Professor Jarocki, who could see through the open door, laughed to himself when his young friend opened the instrument, which had a very unpromising exterior. Chopin also looked at it with some misgivings; but when he had struck a few chords, he exclaimed in joyful surprise, ‘O Santa Cecilia, the piano is in tune!’ Only the impassioned musician knows what it is, after sitting for several days in a diligence, suddenly and quite unexpectedly to have an opportunity of playing on a good instrument. Regardless of his surroundings, our artist began to improvise *con amore*. Attracted by the music, one of the travellers got up and stood behind the player’s chair. Chopin called out to Jarocki in Polish, ‘Now we shall see whether my listener be a connoisseur or not.’ Frederic began his Fantasia on Polish Songs (Op. 13). The traveller, a German, stood like one petrified, captivated by the music, so new and bewitching; his eyes mechanically followed every movement of the pianist’s delicate hand; he had forgotten everything, even his beloved pipe, which went out unheeded. The other travellers stepped in softly, and at the same time the tall postmaster and his buxom wife appeared at the side door, with their two pretty daughters behind them. Frederic, unmindful of his audience, and absorbed in converse with his muse, had lost all thought of where he was, and that he must soon be on his way. More and more tender and graceful became his playing; the fairies seemed to be

singing their moonlight melodies ; every one was listening in rapt attention to the elegant arabesques sparkling from his fingers, when a stentorian voice, which made the windows rattle, called out, 'The horses are ready, gentlemen !' 'Confounded disturber !' roared the postmaster, while the trio of ladies cast angry glances at the postillion. Chopin sprang from his seat, but was immediately surrounded by his audience, who exclaimed with one voice, 'Go on, dear sir, finish that glorious piece, which we should have heard all through but for that tiresome man.' 'But,' replied Chopin, consulting his watch, 'we have already been here some hours, and are due in Berlin shortly.' 'Stay and play, noble young artist,' cried the postmaster ; 'I will give you courier horses if you will only remain a little longer.' 'Do be persuaded,' began the postmaster's wife, almost threatening him with an embrace. What could Frederic do but sit down again to the instrument ? When he paused, the servant appeared with wine and glasses ; the daughters of the host served the artist first, then the other travellers, while the postmaster gave a cheer for their 'darling Polyhymnias,' as he expressed it, in which all united. One of the company (probably the Town-Cantor) went close up to Chopin and said, in a voice trembling with emotion, 'Sir, I am an old and thoroughly trained musician ; I too, play the piano, and so know how to appreciate your masterly performance ; if Mozart had heard it, he would have grasped your hand and cried, "Bravo !"' An insignificant old man like

myself cannot dare to do so.' The women in their gratitude filled the pockets of the carriage with the best eatables that the house contained, not forgetting some good wine. The postmaster exclaimed, with tears of joy, 'As long as I live, I shall think with admiration of Frederic Chopin.' When, after playing one more mazurka, Frederic prepared to go, his gigantic host seized him in his arms, and carried him to the carriage. The postillion, still sulky over his scolding, and jealous because the pretty servant girl could not take her eyes off the interesting *virtuoso*, whispered to her, 'Things often go very unfairly in the world. The young gentleman is carried into the carriage by the master himself; the like of us, though we are musical too, have to climb on the box by ourselves.'

The next year we find the young composer on a more prolonged artistic visit to Vienna and other places. In Vienna he gave a public concert at the Imperial Theatre, and I add the programme as copied by him in a letter home. The modesty of its dimensions, as contrasted with those of our modern pianists, surely deserves note—

'Overture by Beethoven.

My Variations.

Song by Fräulein Veltheim.

My Cracovienne.

A Ballet in conclusion.'

He also improvised, and says on this, 'I improvised from "La Dame Blanche;" and that I might have a

Polish theme, chose "Chmiel." The public, to whom this kind of national melody is quite unknown, seemed electrified. My spies in the pit say the people began a regular dance on the benches.' He goes on, 'There is an almost unanimous opinion that I play too softly, or rather too delicately, for the public here. That is to say, they are accustomed to the drum-beating of their own piano *virtuosi*. I am afraid the newspapers will say the same thing, especially as the daughter of one of the editors drums dreadfully; but, never mind, if it is to be so, I would much rather they said I played too gently than too roughly.' His *naïve* curiosity and interest in the newspaper criticisms, which he retails to his parents, is very amusing.

Another short stay in Warsaw, where he met the singer Constantia Gladkowska, the lady to whom for a long time he was passionately attached, thoughts of whom are said to be interwoven in all his loveliest compositions of the period—and then once more he embarked upon his travels, from which he was fated never to return to his native country again. On 2nd November 1830, he bade farewell to his parents and sisters, and left Warsaw with his friend Titus Woyciechowski (what terrible names these Polish ones are!) for Vienna. Elsner, his old teacher, and a number of his friends, accompanied him to Wola, the first village beyond Warsaw, and there the pupils of the Conservatoire sang a cantata expressly composed by Elsner for the occasion. A banquet afterwards took place, and at

this a silver goblet, beautifully mounted, was presented to him, filled to the brim with the earth of his native land. How he treasured this, and what use the contents of that cup, after many years, were made to serve, I shall have again to speak of.

On the way, *viâ* Breslau, Dresden, and Prague, his letters are full of intelligent and amusing descriptions of the people and things he meets with on the journey. His letter from Vienna, 1st December 1830, contains some very good bits :—‘I have been to see Czerny,’ he says, ‘who was as polite as ever, and asked “Have you been studying diligently?” He has arranged another overture for eight pianos and sixteen players, and seems very happy about it. . . . I was also at Banker Geymüller’s yesterday, where Titus went to receive his 6000 Polish gulden. When he had read my name, Herr Geymüller, without taking any further notice of the letter, said it was very agreeable to him to become acquainted with an artist of such distinction as myself, but he could not advise me to give a concert here, as there were very many good pianists in the city, and a great reputation was requisite to make money. Finally, he remarked, “I cannot help you in any way, the times are too bad.” I listened with big eyes to this edifying discourse, and, when it was over, I replied that I was not at all sure whether it would pay to make a public appearance, for I had not yet called upon any influential people, not even on the Russian Ambassador, to whom I had a letter from the Grand Duke Constantine.

At that Herr Geymüller suddenly changed his tactics ; but I took my leave, regretting I had robbed him of his precious time, and thought to myself, " Wait, you . . . Jew." ' Another of his letters from Vienna to John Natuszynski (one of Chopin's most faithful friends, both at this time, and afterwards in Paris, where he was a professor at the ' *École de Médecine* '), gives some touching revelations of the young artist's feelings :— ' The numerous dinners, soirées, concerts, balls, I am obliged to attend only weary me. I am melancholy. I feel so lonely and deserted here, yet I cannot live as I like. I have to dress and look cheerful in drawing-rooms ; but when I am in my room again, I talk to my piano, to whom, as my best friend in Vienna, I pour out all my sorrows. There is not a soul I can unreservedly confide in, and yet I have to treat every one as a friend. Plenty of people seem indeed to like me, take my portrait, and seek after my company, but they do not make up for you. I have lost my peace of mind, and only feel happy when I can read your letters, think of the monument of King Sigismund (Constantia's house was near this), or look at my precious ring ' (the lady's present). And then there follows some very sentimental and rhapsodical writing about the beloved one, with whom it appears that his friend had been acting as go-between, and wild talk about his ' ashes after death spread beneath her feet,' ' tearing out his hair if he thought she had forgotten him,' and the like, with other indications of his suffering, none the less real—



as some of us know—because it is so foolish and transient.

It is to be noticed that, petted and spoiled as he was, there is no sign anywhere, at this time or afterwards, of his developing the inordinate conceit that is so soon produced in some little minds by praise. How pleasantly he tells, in a letter addressed to his parents from Vienna, of the discovery of some of his compositions actually being treasured in the Imperial Library there :— ‘Yesterday,’ he says, ‘I was at the Imperial Library with Handler. Do you know this is my first inspection of what is, perhaps, the richest collection of musical manuscripts in the world. . . . Now, my dearest ones, picture to yourselves my astonishment at beholding among the new MSS. a book entitled “Chopin.” It was a pretty large volume, elegantly bound. I thought to myself, I have never heard of any other musician named Chopin, but there was a certain Champion, and perhaps there has been a mistake in the spelling. I took out the ms. and saw my own handwriting! Haslinger had sent the original of my ‘Variations’ to the library. This is an absurdity worth remembering.’

The second stay in Vienna was not so successful as the first one. Several causes combined to prevent his talents being properly recognised there. The disturbances at this time taking place in Poland had made the Germans look with distrust and ill-will upon the Poles. The artists were not only jealous of his extraordinary powers, but, as he gave his services at concerts gratuit-

ously, regarded him as an alien *dilettante* and interloper amongst them, and, perhaps, the chief reason of all, his style of playing, so delicate and refined, could not be rightly appreciated in large concert-rooms by the crowd who preferred the thunder and lightning, electric shocks and fireworks, of the modern school of pounding pianists. He gave only one concert. The attendance was small, and the receipts did not cover the bare expenses. This was his last public appearance in Germany, for though he afterwards paid some short visits, he could not be prevailed upon again to play in public there.

In September 1831 he left for Paris, where, though he little expected it then, he was to spend the greater part of his after life. Of his coming to Paris he used sometimes to tell the story with a certain gentle humour occasionally displayed by him. From the fact that at that time Paris was the favourite resort of all the revolutionary Poles, the German authorities were very averse to allowing any of that nationality to visit the French capital, and in consequence Chopin, though really intending to stay there, had his passport *viséd* for London, 'Passant par Paris à Londres.' Long after this, when naturalised in France, he used to say, 'You see I am only passing through.' But of the eventful life that was before him there he used to say, with a sadder and more truthful significance, 'His life consisted of an episode—without a beginning—with a sad end.'

A young man of twenty-two, brimful of genius, conscious of his own powers, but distrustful of his own ability to force himself before the public and gain a living and reputation, he at first suffered much from despondency, and indeed very nearly made up his mind to emigrate to America. His parents conjured him to remain in Europe, even asking him to come back to Warsaw, miserable as life there under the Russian oppressors was at this time ; his friends, Liszt, Hiller, and others, begged him to stay, and told him that better fortune would come if he only waited ; but for once he was obstinate, and began his preparations for the voyage *outré mer*. But it was not to be. A chance meeting in the streets with an old friend of his, Prince Valentine Radziwill, resulted in an entire change in his views. The prince was exceedingly cordial, and when Chopin told him of his approaching journey, wisely said nothing to dissuade him, only extorting a promise that he would spend the evening with him at Baron Rothschild's, the great Jew banker. Chopin went there, and this visit was the turning-point—for good or ill, who knows?—in his Parisian fortunes. A brilliant assembly of the most influential and accomplished members of the aristocratic world was present. Chopin was invited to play, and that night he found himself in the vein ; brilliant improvisation followed improvisation—and his fortune was made. Before he left he had been prevailed upon to promise to give lessons to several of the great ladies present, and from

this time to the end he was never troubled again by the *res angustæ* that afflict so many artists. Just before this he was nearly entrapped into making an arrangement to take lessons from Kalkbrenner, the then famous pianist, who, finding fault with some of the peculiarities of Chopin's style—peculiarities that every pianist since his time has industriously tried to imitate,—was willing to take him as a pupil, but only on condition that he would remain with him for at least three years, possibly with the same idea that Haydn had when he wished Beethoven to style himself 'Élève de Haydn.' Fortunately Chopin was dissuaded by his old master Elsner, who knew too well the originality and power, not only as composer, but also as executant, of his former pupil, from agreeing to so preposterous an arrangement.

Chopin's popularity, when it once commenced, increased with marvellous rapidity, and he soon became the rage amongst the most select and exclusive of the Paris *salons*. A fellow-student of his, Orłowski, says of him at this time, in 1833, 'Chopin is healthy and strong, he turns the heads of the ladies, and the men are jealous of him. He is now the *mode*, and the fashionable world will soon be wearing gloves *à la Chopin*. But he pines after his country.'

Here again, as in Vienna, he found that playing at public concerts was not his *métier*; his style was too refined, his touch too delicately soft to be appreciated in a large hall. As he said to Liszt, 'I am not adapted

for giving concerts. I feel timid in the presence of the public ; their breath stifles me, their curious gaze paralyses me ; but with you it is a vocation, for if you do not please the public, you know how to agitate and confound them.' But in *salons*, with sympathetic listeners round him, and in the society of the beautiful and gifted ladies of the great world of Paris who delighted in his romantically pathetic music, the graceful manners and rare beauty of the young genius who had made his home amongst them—there he was at his best ! His conversation became joyous and brilliant, and when he sat down to the piano, improvisations more beautiful than have ever been written down seemed to flow almost unsought as his long delicate fingers glided over the keys. And not only in the fashionable world had he friends, but many of the great artists of the time were also intimately associated with him. I can only barely mention such names as Rossini, Bellini, Mendelssohn, Cherubini, Hiller, Meyerbeer, Heine, and Ary Scheffer, and, perhaps most closely allied to him, Liszt, that strange being whose life might furnish material for a thousand romances.

In 1834 he went with Ferdinand Hiller to Aix-la-Chapelle, to be present at the Lower Rhine Musical Festival conducted by Mendelssohn, and the three musicians had a delightful 'time' of it together. The next year Chopin paid another visit to Germany, and again met Mendelssohn, who admired his playing,

but does not seem quite to have understood the real artistic greatness of the young Pole.

Poor Chopin's love affairs all ended disastrously. Constantia Gladkowska, whom he worshipped so ardently, married some one else, and another young Polish lady, Maria Wodzyuski, said to have been very charming and amiable, to whom he became engaged during a short visit to Marienbad, soon afterwards rejected him, and chose to marry a Count instead. And then—then there came that episode of which he used to speak with such sad meaning, influencing as it did to such fatal result all his after life. It is thus that his friend Karasowski describes his first meeting with Madame Dudevant, better known to all the world as 'George Sand,' at the house of Countess C.:—'When part of the company had gone, and only the intimate friends of the hostess remained, Chopin, who was in the mood for weaving musical fairy tales (*Märchen*), sat down to the piano and improvised. His hearers, whom in his absorption he had quite forgotten, listened breathlessly. When he had finished he looked up and saw a simply dressed lady leaning on the instrument, and looking at him with her dark passionate eyes as if she would read his soul. Chopin felt himself blushing under her fascinating gaze, she smiled slightly, and when he retired behind a group of camellias he heard a rustling of a silk dress and perceived the odour of violets. The lady who had looked at him so inquiringly while he was at the piano was approaching with

Liszt. In a deep musical voice she said a few words about his playing, and then spoke of the subject of his improvisation. This lady was Aurora Dudevant, whose romances, written under the name of George Sand, were of course well known to him.'

Soon the sympathy and friendship of this extraordinary woman, who seems to have had a fatal faculty for absorbing the life—one might almost say the soul—of those among the men of genius surrounding her whom she chose to fascinate, made him forget the faithlessness of those whom he had loved before. He found not only the passionate love of a romantic woman, but also all the intellectual appreciation, the artistic sympathy, without which love is at best but half a sentiment, and neither he nor she then cared to think—would it last? And for a time there is no doubt that Chopin's life was the most delightful imaginable. In 1837 he first experienced symptoms of a pulmonary complaint, which was, then, mistakenly at the time, it seems, taken to be consumption, and as George Sand and her son Maurice were about to leave Paris for the island of Majorca, they prevailed upon him to accompany them there for the winter.

No journey could have been more unfortunate. The voyage was a very stormy one, and when poor Chopin arrived at Palma, in Majorca, he was put into cold damp apartments, where his malady was grievously augmented. The stupid, superstitious people of the place believed that consumption was infectious, and

they all refused to admit the sufferer to their houses. At last a small slightly-built house, which had been used as a cloister for the monks called 'Waldemosa,' was hired, and here Chopin and George Sand spent part of the winter. The house was situated in a beautifully secluded valley, and surrounded with orange trees, but it was cheerless and draughty, and there the poor artist shivered and suffered through the long days of a most unusually cold and severe winter. The life must have been dismal enough—imagine rain for a fortnight without interruption, and frequent falls of snow. Chopin sent to Marseilles for a stove and a piano, but these were a long time in coming, and, when they arrived, were considered by the natives as most conclusive proofs of the criminal propensities of their visitors, and were firmly believed to be infernal machines intended to blow up the town! The doctors appear to have been as great ignoramuses in their profession as the rest; they treated him for phthisis when he was really suffering from bronchitis, and bled him at the very time when he was the weakest. George Sand watched over him and nursed him tenderly, but—is it quite to be wondered at?—that lonely life in the society of a sick and often irritable man must have been a hard trial for her! Both possessed the sensitive highly-wrought temperament that goes with, and sometimes is one of the penalties of, genius, and those dreary days in Majorca brought the first fatal *désillusionnement*, at least to one of them. George Sand writes



of this time :—‘ Our stay at the cloister was a misery to Chopin, and a severe trial to me. His agreeableness and cheerful amiability in society were frequently matched by the gloominess and peevishness of his behaviour to those around him at home, whom he sometimes drove to despair. A broken rosebud, the shadow of a passing chafer, affected him as much as if he had been bled or touched with glowing iron. Yet I never knew any one so noble-minded, tender, and free from selfishness.’ In those gloomy days all sorts of strange weird fancies came to him, till he fell into such a morbid state that he hardly was able to distinguish between the dream and the reality. To quote again from George Sand, who was never averse, as both Chopin and De Musset unfortunately discovered, to taking the public into her confidence about her private life :— ‘ While staying in this “card house,” he composed some short but very beautiful pieces, which he modestly entitled ‘Preludes.’ They were real masterpieces. Some of them create such vivid impressions, that the shades of the dead monks seem to rise and pass before the hearer in solemn and gloomy funereal pomp. Others are full of charm and melancholy, glowing with the sparkling fire of enthusiasm, breathing with the hope of restored health. The laughter of children at play, the distant strains of the guitar, the twitter of the birds on the damp branches, or the sight of the little pale roses in our cloister garden pushing their heads up through the snow, call forth from his soul melodies

of indescribable sweetness and grace. But many also are so full of gloom and sadness that, in spite of the pleasure they afford, the listener is filled with pain.' And then she goes on to tell the circumstances under which one very wildly beautiful prelude (No. 6, D minor) was written. She and her son had gone to Palma that day to make some necessary purchases, leaving the invalid artist alone. Before their return, heavy rain, making the rivers difficult to cross, had set in. The driver was so frightened that he fled away, leaving the two to make their way back as best they could. A mile and a half took six hours to accomplish, and they did not arrive until midnight. Poor Chopin was in a state of wild excitement; as they came in he sprang up, gazing on them as if they were spectres, and then, after an interval, saying, 'I thought you were dead.' Afterwards he told his friend that while she was away, and he was sitting at the piano waiting her return, he had fallen into a sort of stupor, and a vision had then come to him, under the influence of which he composed this prelude. 'He had fancied while he was playing that he had been removed from earth, and was no longer in the land of the living. He imagined that he was drowned, and as he lay at the bottom of the sea, could feel the cold drops keeping time as they dropped upon his breast. When I called his attention to the even fall of the rain upon the roof, he obstinately maintained that he had not heard it before.'

It was indeed time that he should leave that place, where all the most unhealthy tendencies of his body and mind were being fostered. But an unkind fate still accompanied him. For some time he was too ill to travel, and, when he was slightly recovered, contrary winds set in, and, there being no steamboats then, the ship lay at anchor for three weeks before the impatient travellers could depart. At last, towards the end of the winter, they reached Barcelona, and from thence returned to Marseilles.

Yet a brief time of happiness was before Chopin. He spent the summer at Nohant, George Sand's country house, and the tranquil life in the beautiful weather, and among the beautiful country scenes, for the time seemed to have restored to him the joyous self of former years. At Nohant were gathered together many of the brilliant spirits of the day; all were artists, and enjoyed life with that frank self-abandonment, that keen delight in the varying sensations of the moment, which, when the time comes for enjoyment, is the truest wisdom of all—such as the mere empty-headed worldling seldom has the wit to appreciate or yield to. And the music, with Chopin and Liszt at the piano, and Pauline Viardot Garcia to sing, must have given a charm to those days that none of those who shared in them could afterwards forget.

Before the gloomy after-time that was so soon to come, it is pleasant to think of the gaiety of that brief bright summer at Nohant, when Chopin, still pale and

fragile-looking, took his part in the amusements, the merry escapades, the brilliant converse of the clever men and women whom George Sand had gathered around her. Liszt and he shared the piano between them, each in his way supreme, and there are many stories of their genial *camaraderie* at this time. Thus, one day when Chopin sat down to the piano, it was noticed that the pedals had been removed to be repaired. 'Never mind,' said Liszt, and he went down on his hands and knees, crawling under the piano, and, while Chopin played, he supplied the place of the pedals as perfectly as if the performer's foot had moved them. Then again, Liszt once played a Nocturne of Chopin's, and very much displeased the composer by introducing some daring embellishments of his own into it. (Mendelssohn once said that Liszt played the most difficult music perfectly at first sight, but the second time it was not so good, as there was too much Liszt in it.) Chopin begged him to play the music as it was written, or not at all, and, rather piqued, Liszt replied, 'Well, play it yourself then.' Chopin sat down at the piano, and, just at that moment, a moth from the opened window flew into the lamp and extinguished the light. 'Do not light it,' he exclaimed; 'put out all the lamps—the moonlight is quite enough.' And then for nearly an hour he improvised a moonlight fantasia, so sweet and tenderly beautiful, that nearly all present were in tears, and at the end Liszt came up to Chopin and embraced him; 'You are the true poet,' he said.

But some days afterwards we have the sequel to this. Liszt asked Chopin to play, and he consented; Liszt then begged that all the lights should be put out, and the curtains drawn, that the effect might be more perfectly enjoyed. This was unsuspectingly done, and just as Chopin was going to the piano, Liszt whispered to him to change places. Not quite knowing why this was, Chopin again consented, and seated himself near the piano, while Liszt himself began to play. Most faithfully he imitated Chopin's style, the dreamy music flowed on, the exquisite sentiment and plaintive grace of the soft tones went to the hearts of all, and once more abundant signs of emotion were displayed by the listeners. Now was Liszt's opportunity. He quickly lighted the candles at the piano. 'Why, is it *you*? We thought it was Chopin playing!' and laughter quickly followed the tears they had been indulging in.—the trick had imposed upon them all.

And what a night<sup>4th</sup> that must have been when the party, having discovered a wonderful echo in the grounds, dragged the Erard grand piano into the open air, and there through that clear moonlit summer night—Liszt, Chopin, and Viardot Garcia in turn held converse with that mysterious spirit of the hills! 'It was a strange communion, a whispering, and a murmuring like a magic incantation,' says the narrator of Chopin's playing.

The next few years passed by without much in the way of incident. Chopin was busy, he had many

pupils, mostly ladies of the aristocratic world of Paris; he lived a great deal in society, and the constant feverish excitement of his days and nights had the very worst possible effect upon his delicate constitution. He constantly suffered from an obstinate cough that wore out his strength; he daily grew weaker, and though still writing—and some of his most beautiful pieces date from this time—there is a tone of deep melancholy in his compositions telling too surely of the sad hours that he had often to spend in loneliness and physical exhaustion. In loneliness—for the romance of his life was now ended. He had ardently longed to marry George Sand, but she, either from a disinclination to minister to the wants of an ailing man, or from a deeper-rooted objection to wedded life, caused by her experience of an ill-fated union years before with M. Dudevant, refused him. And the climax came before long. In a book she wrote, ‘*Lucrezia Floriani*,’ she had drawn a picture of Chopin and herself, fanciful in many respects, it is true, and absurdly untrue if read as sober fact, but still the portraits of Chopin, as the capricious and tyrannical Prince Charles, and of herself, as the sweet, self-immolating Lucrezia, were easily recognised by those who read the book. At last, when it was evident to himself and everybody that George Sand’s regard for him had changed into impatient aversion, a violent quarrel took place one day in 1847, of which her daughter was innocently the cause, and Chopin said, ‘I shall leave your house immediately;

I only desire that my existence may be blotted out from your memory.' After this he only saw her on one occasion before he died ; it was in a crowded *salon*. She approached him with looks that seemed to supplicate his pardon ; he gazed at her for a moment, and then abruptly left the room.

In the spring of 1848 Chopin paid a visit to England, and before he left gave a parting concert in the Pleyel Hall in Paris on 16th February, which was indeed to be his farewell one. In London he was presented to the Queen, and played at Court ; but the life that he led here was no improvement upon that of Paris ; the excitement of society, the late hours, followed by wretched sleeplessness, affected him most injuriously. From London he went to Scotland, but here he found the weather very harmful, with its cold and fogs, and the dull *morgue* of Britannic conventionalities terribly weighed him down. He thus writes to his friend Grzymala : ' I am quite incapable of doing anything all the morning, and when I am dressed I feel so exhausted that I am obliged to rest. After dinner I have to sit two hours with the gentlemen, listen to their conversation, and look on while they drink, and feel ready to die with weariness, and think of other things all the time till I go into the drawing-room, when I have to use all my efforts to rouse myself, for everybody is curious to hear me play. After this my good Daniel carries me up-stairs, undresses me, and puts me to bed ; he leaves the light burning,

and I am once more at leisure to sigh and dream, and look forward to passing another day in the same manner.' He complains that his Scotch friends want to introduce him to all their relations, and will kill him with their kindness. But what a pathetic picture this letter gives of the poor artist in the lonely unhoping life he had fallen into! He goes from one place to another—*where* does not make much matter; he thinks he must at least lay by something for the winter. Once he alludes to George Sand: 'I never yet cursed any one, but I am now so overwhelmed by the weariness of life that I am ready to curse Lucrezia.' (He had felt the sting of that miserable book.) 'But there is pain in this too, which is all the worse, as one grows older in wickedness every day.'

But he could not stay in England. He says in his last letter, 'On Thursday I am to leave terrible London. In addition to my other ills I have got neuralgia. Tell Pleyel to send me in a piano on Thursday evening, and have it covered; buy a bunch of violets to make the room smell sweet.' Again he was back in Paris, but soon he could not leave the house, or, indeed, his bed. He suffered very much, but at times spoke calmly of his approaching death, and begged that he might be buried in Père-la-Chaise, near Bellini, whom he had once known and loved.

The end was indeed near; his sister Louise, Madame Jedezejewicz, and his pupil Gutmann watched by him and nursed him with the utmost care, and his



favourite pupil, the Countess Delphine Potocka, also hastened to his side. It was Sunday, 15th October 1849. His friends were round his bed weeping at the sight of his sufferings they were so powerless to relieve. All at once he saw the Countess Potocka, and in a whisper asked her to sing. What could she do? With an immense effort she controlled her feelings, and thinking only of her dear friend and master, gained the strength to sing without faltering Stradella's beautiful 'Hymn to the Virgin.' Chopin, listening to the lovely voice and music, murmured, 'Oh, how beautiful! my God, how beautiful! Again, again!' She sat down to the piano and sang a psalm by Marcello. In the room all was now still, save for that voice intoning the words of faith and supplication; and the watchers, seeing the end was near, fell on their knees and waited, while he lay apparently insensible on his couch. But he lingered on till the next evening, when he took the sacrament, and resting his head on his faithful Gutmann's shoulder, repeated after the priest in a clear voice the words of the Litany. Soon the death agony came upon him; he made a sign for some water, and after moistening his lips, bent his head and kissed Gutmann's hand. Then, with a sigh, his spirit passed away, and Chopin, whom Schumann calls 'the boldest and proudest poetic spirit of the age,' was no more—at least for earth.

It was widely known how much he loved flowers, and so many were sent by his friends that his body

was literally covered with them. Mozart's 'Requiem,' which Chopin had specially begged should be sung, was performed at the Madeleine, Mesdemoiselles Viardot Garcia and Castellan, and Signor Lablache taking the solos, and the funeral march was his own from the B flat minor sonata, scored for the occasion by Reber. When his body was lowered into the grave a handful of Polish earth was scattered over the coffin. Do you remember that cup filled with the soil of his mother-country which had been given to him nineteen years before, in the days when, a youth with glowing hopes and aspiring genius, he had left Poland to see and conquer the world? He had carefully treasured it all the time, and the earth that now fell upon his coffin was poured from that relic of his long-sundered youth. His heart, according to Chopin's desire, was taken to his native land, and it is now treasured in the Church of the Sacred Cross at Warsaw.

Something of the ill fortune that was with him in his life befell some of his most valued possessions after his death. The furniture of his two *salons*, with many of the souvenirs that he had preserved, was bought by a Miss Stirling, one of his most enthusiastic pupils and admirers. These, including his portrait by Ary Scheffer, his piano, a set of Sèvres porcelain presented by Louis Philippe, and other gifts, were taken by her to Scotland, and after her death, according to the directions of her will, were sent to Madame Chopin at Warsaw—and when she also died, passed into the hands

of her daughter, Madame Isabella Barcinska. In 1863, during the disturbances which preceded the insurrection in Poland, some Orsini bombs were thrown from the fourth floor of the house in which Madame Barcinska lived (her rooms were on the second floor) at the moment that Count von Berg, the Russian governor, was passing in the street. In an instant the house and the one next to it were surrounded by the soldiery, all the men there were dragged to prison, and the women brutally driven away. Every article of property in the house was flung by the infuriated soldiers out of the windows, and a huge pile of furniture, with all the precious Chopin mementos,—his piano, books, pictures, his correspondence with his family during eighteen years,—was set fire to in the square at the foot of the statue of Copernicus, and there the great bonfire, in which it is said from fifteen to twenty pianos were burnt, blazed up through all that night, while the soldiers, who had pillaged the wine shops near, held high revel around the flames.





BORN JUNE 8, 1810. DIED JULY 26, 1856.

# SCHUMANN.

*A soft voice keeps saying while I write, 'It is not in vain what thou art writing.'*

LETTER ON 'PARADISE AND THE PERI.'

NONE of Schumann's relations showed any fondness for music, and though his father, August Schumann, early devoted himself to literature (combined with bookselling), and was all his life long a writer of books, such as 'The Merchant's Compendium,' 'The Saxon Cyclopædia,' 'Portraits of Contemporaneous Celebrities,' no special talent of any kind can be instanced as previously exhibited in the family.

Robert Schumann was born on the 8th of June 1810, at Zwickau, 'in the fifth house in the market-place,' as his biographer circumstantially relates. He does not seem at any time in his life to have been subject to any very serious pecuniary trials, and as the son of an industrious, intelligent tradesman, who was not himself wanting in the love of art, his early taste for music was from the first encouraged and fostered. In his seventh or eighth year we hear of him composing dances, though the rules of thorough bass were quite unknown to him; and he early became renowned among his companions,

like Chopin, for his power of extemporising funny stories in music, and even 'sketching the different dispositions of his friends by certain figures and passages on the piano so exactly and comically, that every one burst into loud laughter at the similitude of the portrait.'

A proof of his father's interest and belief in the boy's musical talent is afforded by the fact that he wrote to Weber, the composer, asking him to undertake his son's training, and Weber is said readily to have acceded to the request, though, for some unknown reason, the arrangement was never carried out. Young Schumann was at this time left too much to himself, and the position of musical prodigy in a small town, with little sound knowledge either of the theory or practice of music, was not a beneficial one to him, and left him afterwards much leeway painfully to be made up. In 1826 his father died, and as his mother and Herr Rüdel, his guardian, considered that it would be better for him to adopt some useful (!) profession, such as the law, instead of dreaming his life away at the piano, he was sent off to Leipzig, and entered there as a student of law in March 1828. But his legal studies little troubled him, and he was at this time passing through the Jean Paul fever, which every clever German youth must undergo (though with Schumann the influence of Jean Paul Richter is discernible through all his writings and music almost up to the last), and his letters of this period are full of 'gush' and sentiment the most extravagant. In one of them this philosopher of eighteen

exclaims, 'Ah, what would the world without men be? A boundless churchyard; a dreamless sleep of death; a flowerless, springless nature; a lifeless peep-show without a puppet. And yet what is this world of men? A vast cemetery filled with faded dreams; a garden of cypresses and weeping willows; a dull peep-show with sobbing dolls. O God, that is it!'

But in Leipzig he made an acquaintance the results of which were fated to be of the utmost importance and blessing to him. He was introduced to the house of Friederich Wieck, a sound musician and sensible merry-hearted man, and there he first saw Clara Wieck, at that time a girl of nine years of age, but already exhibiting marvellous musical powers. For the first time Schumann received real music lessons from Herr Wieck, but at that period of his life he solely devoted himself to pianoforte-playing, with little if any idea of the higher art of composition. Indeed, if it had not been for the consequences, calamitous enough at the time, of an experiment with his right hand which he foolishly made, the world might have gained one *virtuoso* the more and lost a great composer. As for Schumann's legal studies, it may be fairly said that they were never really commenced; he confessed afterwards that the utmost he did was to go as far as the door of the lecture-room, pause there, turn on his heels and go away.

In 1831 he composed his 'Opus' the 'Abegg Variations' as they are called. These were written on the



name of Meta Abegg, a beautiful young lady of Mannheim; but, according to his own account, the theme was suggested by no sentimental reason, as might have been supposed, for not he but one of his friends was in love with her. However that may be, *a, b flat, e, gg* made a very good theme for the young composer's first essay.

Passing over a journey to Italy and the continuance of Schumann's student life at Heidelberg, we come to the year 1830, when his artistic career may be said to have first distinctly commenced. The legal farce could not be kept up any longer, and he wrote to his mother entreating her to write to Wieck for his opinion on the best course for the young man to take—was he to be a musician or a legal drudge? Fortunately Wieck reported so favourably of young Schumann's talents that his mother withdrew her opposition, and the youth returned to Leipzig, engaged lodgings there, and again took lessons from Wieck. But now came the calamity I have spoken of. Schumann was all his life too fond of quackery, and in this case he suffered from a bit of quackery of his own. He had devised a machine by means of which he hoped to obtain the utmost freedom of fingering, and the consequence of its use was that the sinews of the third finger of the right hand lost their elasticity, and instead of striking downwards, provokingly flew upwards at the slightest movement. He seldom spoke of this matter, but it is believed that the instrument was one confining the third finger and leaving the others free to be used alone. But however it was,

poor Schumann never properly recovered the use of that unlucky third finger, and his hopes of becoming a famous pianist were for ever at an end. But this disappointment turned him the more to composition, and now began the true artist's life. He applied to Heinrich Dorn, leader of the orchestra of the Royal Theatre at Leipzig, for lessons in the theory of music, and set to work in real earnest at the dry studies of counterpoint and the science of music, which before he had been rather inclined to despise and underrate.

Soon we find the fruits of his new studies in piano-forte pieces; and, as might have been expected of a young composer—an ambitious effort in the grandest style—a Symphony in G minor was produced by him, which, however, he wisely did not include among his numbered works. In 1833 an event occurred which was a sad precursor of the troubles of his after-life. His sister-in-law, Rosalie, to whom he was much attached, died; and one night, he calls it 'that fearful night of October 17,' he fell into a state of terrible depression and mental anguish. It has been said that he tried to throw himself out of the window—he lived on the fourth floor—and it is a significant fact that he never afterwards would live on the upper floor of any house.

The following year a new artistic paper, the '*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*,' was started by a number of young enthusiastic musicians, who wanted to have bolder and more truthful criticisms of art than those of

the 'critical honey-daubers,' as Schumann called them, of the ordinary press. Schumann, of course, was in the thick of it, and of the original founders he it was who worked the hardest and the longest on this journal. Contrary to the usual fate of such productions, it was almost at once a success, and deserved to be so. For me, the thought of all that Schumann accomplished as editor and contributor to that paper—the unstinted praise, the genial appreciative words, that he wrote in its pages of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Hiller, and others, whom the world by no means universally then recognised as great or even respectable musicians, and when I think how utterly devoid his criticisms are of the petty spite and jealousy which a man, himself both musical composer and *littérateur*, so frequently indulges in (if he has a chance) against his more favoured and famous contemporaries—all this gives us a deeper regard than almost anything else for Schumann in that inner nature of his, which it is so hard to comprehend, and so easy to decry as morbid and perverse. In the pages of this journal he soon introduced a number of fictitious characters under certain fantastic names, such as Florestan, Eusebius, Raro, Serpentinus, and others, in which the influence of Jean Paul is clearly perceptible. Behind the curtain of these names, united by him under the general title of the 'Davidsbündler,' he found it very convenient to fling out the many wild fancies of that strangely brooding, mystical mind of his. And not only do these characters appear in his journal, but

also in his music, for in the 'Carnival Scènes mignonnes pour piano,' Op. 9, written in 1834, we find the following characters mentioned :—'Florestan, Eusebius, Chopin, Chiara, Estrella, and Paganini (a curious jumble of fictitious and real names), among whom glide the typical masqueraders, Pierrot, Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Columbine.' A number of pieces are included in these 'Scènes,' among them the march of 'David's Allies against the Philistines,' evidently typifying his own struggles against the Philistines, not unknown in art and real life even at the present day. These 'Scènes Mignonnes,' and his 'Études Symphoniques,' composed a short time before, were his first great works. In these the master's hand can now be clearly discerned. About this time Schumann was involved in a rather foolish passion for a certain Ernestine von Fricker, which, as it seems, happily came to nothing ; but to her influence we owe the 'Carnival Music,' which is based on a simple theme of four notes, under their foreign names forming the letters 'Asch,' the name of the town in Bohemia whence she had come to Leipzig. At one time he wanted to marry her ; but she rather mysteriously passes out of the story, and the next love affair that we hear of is the one that brought to his life permanent happiness and rest, such as seldom it has been the fate of poet or musician to taste of. Clara Wieck was now a woman, and Schumann, first admiring her as the artist, at last learned to love her for herself. But she was not won without waiting, anxious

struggles, and hard labour on her lover's part. She, as a pianist of the first rank, was already celebrated. Schumann was almost unknown by the world, and, even by those who knew him, was too much regarded as an eccentric youth who wrote incomprehensible music. He could not learn what Clara's feelings towards him were; and a long concert tour throughout Europe, undertaken by her in company with her father, gave him an opportunity for indulging in all the misgivings, gloomy fancies, and changeful dreams, in which poets so excel. But he had one consolation—he had now learned to speak through his art to the woman whom he loved. 'Truly, from the contests Clara cost me,' he writes, 'much music has been caused and received. The Concerto, the Sonatas, Davidsbündler dances, Kreisleriana, and Novelettes, owed their origin almost wholly to them.' The concerto (oddly called 'Sans Orchestre') for piano alone, a noble work, in which the andantino, consisting of variations on an air written by Clara Wieck, reveals the object of his thoughts; and the Fantasia in C major, worthy of Beethoven himself, and the lovely 'Kinderscenen,' belong to the period.

And when at last he knew that Clara loved him, his difficulties were by no means at an end. Her father would not consent to their union. In 1837 Schumann writes:—'The old man won't let Clara leave him yet; he's too fond of her, and he is really in the right, for he thinks we ought to earn more money first, so that we may live comfortably.' With a view to increasing

his income, Schumann went to Vienna, where, in a wider sphere, he hoped that his literary work and his music might gain truer appreciation. Although he did not succeed in the object of his visit there, it was not without its fruits. Before this he had recognised the rare genius of Schubert, long so shamefully ignored, and when Schumann was in Vienna he hunted up the brother of the dead composer, and among the heap of neglected manuscripts that he found in his possession was the score of the glorious C major symphony, which Schumann at once sent to Mendelssohn, under whose conductorship, many years after it was written, it was first publicly performed at the Gewandhaus Concerts in Leipzig on 12th December 1839.

As Clara's father continued obstinately to oppose the marriage, Schumann at last lost patience, and, according to the German law in such cases, obtained, in 1840, a decree of the Court dispensing with his consent, and the next year the two were united at the country church of Schönhof, near Leipzig. It is pleasant to find that there was no lasting enmity between old Wieck and his son-in-law, for they soon settled down again into the old friendly intercourse of former days.

And now Schumann began to feel that the maturity of his powers had come, and that at last the great symphonic works he had so long looked forward to might be attempted. Some time before indeed, in 1839, he had written to his old teacher Dorn, 'I often feel tempted to crush my piano : it's too narrow

for my thoughts. I really have very little practice in orchestral music, yet still I hope to master it.' In 1840 his B flat Symphony was completed, the first of the four great symphonies now accepted as among the masterpieces of music, the others, produced at irregular intervals, being in D minor, C major, perhaps the finest of all, and E flat, called the Rhenish Symphony, a magnificent tone-picture, in part founded upon the impressions produced by the imposing spectacle of the installation of Archbishop Geissel as cardinal in Cologne Cathedral. In the year of his marriage, too, he produced, evidently under the inspiration of Clara and his newly found happiness, an immense number of songs, most of them to words by Heine, and, great and small, reaching in the published list a total of 138. Not always are they successful; sometimes too much is attempted in the expression of the poet's thought, sometimes there is a mystic vagueness and too great diffuseness in the setting of these songs, yet there is in them all the true and noble workmanship of a master. In 1842 his piano quintet and quartet, now recognised as among the noblest and most beautiful of their kind, were also written, and show the wonderful sweep and all-round mastery to which as a musician he had then attained.

Passing over his connection with the new school of music opened in Leipzig in 1841 under Mendelssohn as principal, in which Schumann was professor of pianoforte-playing and composition, and in which he showed that he had even less talent for teaching than Mendelssohn

had himself, we come to his great work, 'Paradise and the Peri,' founded on Moore's poem, and first produced at the Gewandhaus in 1843. This is beautiful in parts, but there is a certain heaviness and diffuseness, always Schumann's weakness, in it, and it cannot, as a whole, be counted among his best works.

The following year he was prevailed upon by Clara to leave his 'quiet home,' of which, in the company of his wife and children, he had become so fond, and to go for a concert tour in Russia, where the two fairly divided the honours, the wife's pianoforte-playing and the husband's compositions everywhere being greeted with the warmest enthusiasm. On Schumann's return, partly from a consciousness that he had been overstraining his mental powers, partly from increased absorption in his musical labours, he relinquished his part in the management of the 'Neue Zeitschrift,' with which for so many years he had been associated. And in this year the first decided symptoms of the terrible malady that was finally to overpower him were shown. He had removed to Dresden in December 1844, and about this time laboured incessantly at the music he was composing to scenes from the second part of 'Faust,' a subject exactly suiting his own mystical and often morbid fancies. Dr. Helbig, of Dresden, who attended him at this time, says, 'On completing the "Faust" music he fell into a morbid condition, manifested by the following symptoms: as soon as he began to use his brain, shivering, faintness, and cold feet set in, together with



great pain and a peculiar fear of death—which took the form of a dread of high hills or houses, of all metallic substances (even keys), medicine, and infection. He suffered much from loss of sleep, and felt worse at dawn than at any other time.

But with the aid of occasional rests, sea-bathing, and some concert tours, which with his wife he took to Vienna, Prague, and elsewhere, these symptoms so far abated, that for several years they only intermittently recurred. In his works belonging to this period there is not the slightest sign of decaying power, and if there are traces of the mental gloom that now pressed on him, they appear rather in the manful struggle, 'seeking to beat off the disease,' as he says, than in the weak complainings that might be expected from a hypochondriac. Between 1847 and 1849 his labours were wonderfully prolific, but I can only mention three works that were then composed in widely different styles, and first of these 'Genoveva,' his one opera, which can hardly be said to be a success. His genius was wanting in the dramatic element, and the book of the opera was not one out of which a good acting piece could be made. It was performed in June 1850 at the Leipzig theatre, but only three representations were given, and it was then laid on the shelf. The music to Byron's 'Manfred,' on the other hand, is one of the noblest works of the master. At no time in his life had Schumann, unfortunately, any settled religious faiths, like his friend Mendelssohn, but the spirit-world, with its haunting

horrors, its mysterious glories, and its infinite gloom, always exercised a strong, and, as the event proved, a very dangerous fascination upon him. He felt a kinship between the spirit of Manfred and his own. Even when reading the poem to his friends he once burst into tears, and was so mastered by his emotions that he could proceed no further; and of the music he once said, 'I never devoted myself to any composition with such lavish love and power as to "Manfred."' The third work, 'The Christmas Album,' published as 'Forty Compositions for the Young,' is due to a far purer and healthier influence. No one has written such beautiful and *true* children's music as Schumann, and in the record of a life in which there was much of sadness and gloom, it is pleasant to find these breaks of simple human nature, showing all the poet's rarest sympathy with the gladness and hopes of little children. 'The first in the Album,' he says, 'I wrote for our eldest child's birthday; and in this way one after another was called forth.'

In 1850, through the kindness of Hiller, Schumann had the offer of the post of musical director in Düsseldorf made to him. There is a sadly significant touch in one of the letters he wrote to Hiller inquiring about this post. 'One thing more, I looked in an old geography recently for remarks on Düsseldorf, and found mentioned, among other buildings there, three nunneries and an insane asylum. The first are all well enough, but the last is most disagreeable. I will tell you my

feelings in regard to it. Several years ago, as you may remember, we lived at Maxen. I discovered that the chief thing to be seen from my window was Sonnenstein (a lunatic asylum). The prospect became horrible to me ; indeed, it spoiled all my pleasure.' Reassured on this point, Schumann accepted the post, and he and his wife were received with open arms on their removing to Düsseldorf. But the post was one for which he was little fitted ; he was not a good conductor, he lacked the ability to convey his own enthusiasm and ideas to those under him, and besides this, his physical strength was soon exhausted, and his friends watching him could not but perceive how by degrees his directive powers were failing him. After three years, during which the acting committee of directors had treated him most leniently and considerately, it was found necessary to make some other arrangement, and a temporary conductor was appointed until he should recover his health.

Relieved from these distasteful duties, he returned with redoubled ardour to composition, and a very fever of work seemed to possess him. It is hard to believe that at this time, when there is no doubt that he was already oppressed by the disease that afterwards so fatally manifested itself, he should yet have composed some of his noblest works, the D minor and Rhenish Symphonies ; cantatas like 'The Pilgrimage of the Rose,' and 'The King's Son ;' orchestral works like the overture to the 'Bride of Messina,' and several sonatas, trios, pianoforte pieces, and many songs. It is as if he were

oppressed by the sentiment expressed in 1849 by him in a letter, 'As I told you before, I've been exceedingly busy all the year; we must work while daylight lasts.'

But the daylight was fast fading, and the thick night too surely closing in around him. He was in a constant state of over-wrought nervous excitement, which his too ready acceptance of the new gospel of spiritualism, then first being preached, very dangerously ministered to. One night he rose from his bed in a state of almost incoherent excitement; he called for a light, saying that Schubert and Mendelssohn had just visited him and communicated a theme which he must at once write out, and this he straightway did. The last work he accomplished was to write a set of five pianoforte variations on this theme. A friend of his says that when in his company shortly before this, poor Schumann suddenly threw down the paper he was reading, and exclaimed, 'I can read no more—I hear an incessant *A!*'

At last, on Shrove Tuesday 1854, the total collapse of his mental powers came. Two of his friends, the one a doctor and the other a musician, called to see him in the middle of the day. They had been talking cheerfully for some time, when Schumann, without explanation, rose and went out of the room. His friends expected he would return, but when some time had passed and he did not come back, the alarm was given, and his wife searched throughout the house for him. Then the friends went out of doors to search for

him. After a time a crowd was seen approaching the door, and then the pitiful story was made known. The composer in his dressing-gown and slippers had gone straight from his home to the bridge over the Rhine, and there had flung himself into the water. Some men on the bank had seen this, and jumping into a boat pulled to the spot where he had sunk, and on his coming to the surface rescued him. He was brought home, but a raving fit of madness quickly followed, and there was nothing else for it—he was removed to a private asylum at Endenich, near Bonn. There for two years he remained, and though at times he had lucid intervals and corresponded with his wife, yet his mind was a perfect wreck, and his death on the 26th of July 1856 was a merciful release to the poor over-wrought spirit. He was buried in the churchyard by the Sternerthor at Bonn.

Schumann was of middle height, and there was nothing in his appearance to betoken the inner genius of the man. His face was round and ruddy, squarely cut, with something of a heavy and forbidding look, though this was redeemed by a lofty well-formed forehead. He had a curious habit of looking downwards with half closed eyes, and it was only in intercourse with his most intimate friends that his real nature came out, and the true kindness, nobility, and spiritual beauty of his inner life was revealed. A distinguished musician now resident in London, Herr R—, once gave me a very animated description of the evenings which, in the

happiest days of Schumann's life, he often spent at the composer's house. Liszt used to be there, and Joachim, and many of the finest players of the time; and splendid as the performances which he has heard and taken part in since then, none equal in his recollection those *in camera* at Düsseldorf. Schumann was fond of taking country walks with him, but almost invariably in perfect silence. Heinrich Dorn amusingly refers to this habit of the composer. 'When I saw Schumann in 1843, after long separation,' he says, 'there was a musical party in the house on the occasion of his wife's birthday. Among the guests was Mendelssohn. We had barely time to exchange a couple of words, for new guests were constantly arriving. When I went away, Schumann said in a regretful tone, "Oh, we haven't been able to talk together at all." I comforted him and myself with the hope of a speedy meeting, and said laughingly, "Then we'll be silent to our heart's content!" "Oh!" he answered, blushing, "then you've not forgotten me?"' And Herr R— described the last time that he saw his friend. None of his acquaintances were allowed to speak to Schumann during the last days at Endenich, as this always so terribly excited him, and it was only after promising not to address him, that Herr R— was one day allowed to walk in the early morning in the grounds of the asylum on the chance that he might see his friend there. At last, hidden among some bushes, the watcher perceived Schumann approaching—then he passed near in front of the place where Herr R— was

hidden—to the latter's consternation he found that he was discovered, and Schumann, with a strange half-perplexed half-frightened look, was gazing right at the spot where his friend was stationed. The latter was sorely tempted to break his promise and speak, but quickly mastering this longing he turned and fled away. Long afterwards he was haunted by the sight of those wild sorrowful eyes with their look as of weary unanswered questioning, 'Why is it thus?'

Very soon after this the answer came ; and the great musician passed away to the *requiem æternam* of the better life.

# BERLIOZ.

BORN DECEMBER 11, 1803. DIED MARCH 8, 1869.

*Decidedly this fellow has great ideas.*

HABENECK.

BERLIOZ was very unlike some of the other musicians of whom I have written, of whose lives as individuals so little is known, that their names have hardly more meaning than as so many simple appendages to their music. In Berlioz, on the other hand, the man, of whom we know so much from his 'Mémoires' and his letters, is almost as interesting as the composer. He had a terrible pen of his own, as his enemies learnt full well ; completely without reserve, and with all the keen wit and vivacity of the accomplished French *littérateur*, he tells in these 'Mémoires' the story of himself, and the constant broils in which, from the beginning to the end of his life, he was involved ; and however exaggerated and fanciful may be some of his pictures of his contemporaries, there can be no question but that he succeeds in giving a most truthful picture of *himself*. Indeed, as a charming work of self-revelation, I only know of two other books to compare with these



'Mémoires' of his,—the 'Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini' (about whom, by the way, he wrote an opera) and the 'Confessions' of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Hector Berlioz was born on the 11th December 1803, at Côte-Saint-André, a little town situated in the Department of Isère in France. His father, a physician, and evidently a man of superior intellect, undertook his son's education, and taught him Latin, history, geography, and even music. Berlioz recounts an early romantic episode at the age of twelve. His mother used to take Hector and his sisters for three weeks at the end of the summer every year to Meylan, where their grandfather, M. Marmion, lived. There was a white house, surrounded by vineyards and gardens, on the side of the hill above Meylan, and there lived a Madame Gautier, with her two daughters, of whom the youngest, aged eighteen, was named Estelle. 'The name itself,' he says, 'would have sufficed to attract my attention; it was already dear to me on account of Florian's pastoral, "Estelle and Nemorin," discovered in my father's library, and read by me in secret hundreds of times over and over again. But she who bore the name was eighteen years of age, of beautiful figure, with large eyes armed to conquer, though always smiling, tresses worthy to adorn the casque of Achilles, feet, I will not say of an Andalusian, but of a Parisian *pur sang*, and . . . rose-coloured slippers!' Of course she was only amused with his childish devotion, and after he was thirteen years of age, he did not see her again until, at

thirty, revisiting his old home, his mother maliciously sent him with a message to a Madame F—. 'Twas she—Estelle—still beautiful—Estelle, the nymph, the hamadryad of the green slopes of Meylan. The old familiar carriage of the head, the splendid tresses, the dazzling smile—but the little rose-coloured slippers, alas! where were they?'

The first lessons in music that he received were, oddly enough, on the flageolet, flute, and guitar. It seems that his father intentionally kept him from the piano, fearing that if the boy practised it, he would become too passionately attached to music, while another and more serious career was designed for him. But he had already got hold of Catel's Treatise on Harmony, commenced composition, and written a quartet and quintet, performed with great *éclat* by himself and his friends. He says, 'The attempts at composition of my youth bore the mark of a deep melancholy. Almost all my melodies were in the minor key. I perceived the fault, without being able to avoid it. A black veil covered my thoughts, my romantic love of Meylan had imprisoned them.'

In 1822 he came to Paris in company with his cousin Robert, ostensibly to study medicine, but a visit one night to the opera, where Salieri's 'Danaïdes' was being played, decided his already wavering thoughts—he would be a musician or nothing. Soon in the library of the Conservatoire he had laid hold of the scores of Gluck's works. 'I read and re-read them,' he says. 'I

copied, I learnt them by heart ; they made me lose my sleep, forget to eat and drink. I raved over them ; and the day when, after anxious waiting, I was at last permitted to hear "Iphigénie en Tauride," I swore when leaving the Opera, that despite father, mother, uncles, aunts, grandparents, and friends, I would be a musician.' With characteristic dauntlessness he straightway paid a visit to Lesueur of the Chapelle Royale, taking with him a cantata for full orchestra, to the words of Millevoye, 'The Arab Steed,' and asking to be admitted to the master's composition class. Lesueur, a worthy but rather pedantic and old-fashioned musician, read the cantata through carefully and then returned it, saying, 'There is much fire and dramatic movement in it, but you don't know how to write, and your harmonies are so full of faults, that it would be useless to point them all out.' But he arranged that Berlioz should take lessons to begin with from his pupil Gerono, and when sufficiently advanced should join his own class, a place in which was soon gained by the young enthusiast. Operas, grand masses, and symphonies, were before long dreamed of by him, and with his usual audacity he set to work to realise these dreams. Berlioz was not exactly a giant, but he was always attempting gigantic things. He wrote a mass for M. Masson, *maître de chapelle* of St. Roch, but owing to the incompetence of the choristers engaged, and the innumerable mistakes in the copies, the rehearsal was such an utter failure that the idea of a performance had for the time to be abandoned.

And the worst was, that his parents heard of this failure, and of course made it an argument for his relinquishing this mad dream of a musical career. But he was not discomfited; recognising the faults of the composition, he entirely re-wrote the mass, and then, having no money, undertook the labour of copying himself all the vocal and orchestral parts. The next thing was to obtain 1200 francs for the performance, as he did not choose to trust again to M. Masson's miserable forces. Though utterly unknown to the then celebrated writer M. de Chateaubriand, Berlioz conceived the idea of writing to him for assistance, and the letter he received in reply was such a kindly one, that I cannot resist the temptation to insert it:—'You ask me for 1200 francs, Monsieur; I have not got them: I would send you them if I had; and I have no means of being of use to you with the ministers. I take, Monsieur, a warm interest in your efforts. I love art, and honour its ministers; but the trials to which talent is put sometimes insure its triumph, and the day of success recompenses for all one has suffered. *Recevez, Monsieur, tous mes regrets; ils sont bien sincères*,—CHATEAUBRIAND.' At last, by the loan of the money made by a friend, De Pons, the mass was performed and favourably received. But the composer was not satisfied with it, and after another trial a few years later he says:—'As I could not now remain in doubt as to the small value of my mass, I separated from it the 'Resurrexit,' with which I was content, and I burnt the rest, in company with the scene from

'Beverley,' for which my passion was now cooled, my opera 'Estelle,' and a Latin oratorio, 'The Crossing of the Red Sea,' that I had just finished. A cold inquisitorial glance had made me recognise their incontestable right to figure in this *auto-da-fé*.'

Lesueur, who throughout proved a very good friend to Berlioz, obtained for him a place in his class in the Conservatoire, and this was the occasion of Cherubini, the director of that institution, being brought into relations, perhaps more intimate than he desired, with the turbulent young iconoclast. The first actual meeting between the two had taken place about a year before, and a very comic description is given by Berlioz of this first *rencontre*. Cherubini, on being appointed to the direction, had given orders for the male and female students to be admitted by separate entrances, the males by the door in the Faubourg Ponsonnière, the females by that of the Rue Bergère. Berlioz, who then was in the habit of frequenting the library for the study of his beloved Gluck, entered one morning by the newly prohibited door in the Rue Bergère, and had just reached the library door when the domestic, full of official zeal, tried to turn him back. As may be imagined, this had not the slightest effect, and Berlioz was soon seated in the library absorbed in his study of the 'Alcestis.' But the incident was not over. Cherubini, informed by the servant, arrived in search of the delinquent, and slowly made a tour of the tables, scanning the countenances of the students. 'At last, le voilà !' and the terrible principal

faced the object of his wrath. Berlioz says, 'Cherubini was in such a rage, that for an instant he was not able to articulate a word. "Oh, oh, oh, it's you," he said at last, with his Italian accent, that his fury made still more comic, "it's you who enter by the door that—that—that I've forbidden!" "Monsieur, I did not know it; another time I will conform to your rule." "Another time! another time! What—what—what are you doing here?" "You see, Monsieur, I came here to study Gluck's scores." "And what have you to do with Gluck? Who's given you leave to come to the library?" "Monsieur (I began to lose my calmness), I consider that Gluck's scores contain the finest specimens of dramatic music, and I need no one's permission to come here and study them. From ten to three the library of the Conservatoire is open to the public, and I have a right to use it." "The—the—right!" "Yes, Monsieur." "I forbid you to come here again." "I shall come all the same." "What—t—t—t is your name?" he cried, trembling with fury. I becoming pale in my turn, said, "Monsieur, my name will some time possibly become known to you, but to-day—you shall not know it." "Stop, stop him, Hottin (the name of the servant); I—I—I'll put him in prison." Then the two, master and servant, to the great stupefaction of those present, set themselves to pursue me round the tables, upsetting desks and stools without being able to reach me.' Whether, when he was afterwards introduced in a more formal manner, Cherubini recognised

him he could not tell, but it was not long before the two came into collision again.

Berlioz's parents were still bitterly opposed to his following music as a profession, and on one or two occasions his allowance was withdrawn for a time, during which period the poor fellow was in great straits, the story of which does not lose anything, we may be sure, in the telling. Instead of going to dine at a restaurant, he then adopted a cenobite régime, which reduced the price of his meals to seven or eight sous, and he dined on bread, raisins, dates, or prunes, and 'as it was then warm weather, after making my gastro-nomic purchases at the neighbouring grocer's I usually seated myself on the little *terrasse* of the Pont Neuf, under the statue of Henry v., and there made my frugal repast.' He gave a few lessons in singing and on the flute and guitar, and occupied himself undauntedly in composing a grand opera, 'Les Francs Juges,' the poem of which was later on refused by the Royal Academy of Music, and the entire music was in consequence never performed. The overture, however, has frequently been given. When winter came the *salle à manger* of the Pont Neuf had to be given up, and additional means of living must be devised. A new *opéra comique* was to be produced at the Théâtre des Nouveautés, and he applied for a post of flute-player there. Death and furies! There was no vacancy, but the *régisseur* promised to let him know if there was room for him in the chorus; and a letter inviting him to compete was received

in a few days. Then follows a most amusing description of the contest for this place, the other competitors being a weaver, a blacksmith, a broken-down actor, and a chorister from St. Eustache. After the others had each sung the piece he had laboriously prepared, Berlioz was asked what he had brought. Nothing! he would sing anything they liked. What pieces did he know? He knew by heart the 'Danaïdes,' 'Stratonice,' 'La Vestale,' 'Cortez,' 'Œdipe,' The two 'Iphigénies,' 'Orphée,' 'Armide,' and as he sang correctly an air taken at hazard, no wonder he was victorious, and received an engagement at fifty francs a month.

But during this time Berlioz was not idle. He competed for the Grand Prix de Rome, the subject being Orpheus torn to pieces by the Bacchantes, but his composition was adjudged 'inexecutable' by the jury. Soon after this he fell ill, suffering from a quinsy. Antoine, the friend who lived with him, left him the whole day and the greater part of the night; he had no servant or nurse. 'I believe,' he says, 'I should have died one night without assistance if I had not in a paroxysm of pain, with a fierce thrust of my penknife, pierced the abscess that was choking me at the bottom of my throat. This unscientific operation was the signal for my recovery.' Shortly after this his father relented, and his allowance was restored, so that he was able to give up his distasteful occupation on the boards of the theatre.

There is something so inimitably funny in Berlioz's



account of the manner in which he now undertook the duty of director of the public taste at the opera, that I cannot resist the temptation (to repeat our former phrase) of transcribing his complacent narrative of it. He had collected together a number of young men and inoculated them with his own enthusiasm. These he took in a body to the opera a long time before the piece commenced, and as soon as the parts were distributed on the desks in the orchestra, and it was known that the opera announced would be performed (a thing which did not always happen), he commenced his discourse, explaining to his disciples the story of the work to be given, singing the most striking passages, indicating the peculiar excellence of certain parts of the orchestration—to the immense astonishment of their neighbours in the pit, honest provincials for the most part who could not understand his enthusiasm. Then, as the members of the orchestra trooped in, Berlioz reviewed them by name, and dilated on their excellencies and demerits. The terrible young man with the long nose and wild masses of red hair was implacably severe on any tampering with the score of his favourite operas. One night he noticed that cymbals had been introduced in the Scythian dance in 'Iphigénie en Tauride,' where Gluck only employs stringed instruments. 'Boiling with rage I restrained myself to the end of the dance, and then, profiting by a short moment of silence separating it from the next piece, I shouted with all the strength of my voice, "There ought to be no cymbals there. Who

is it that dares to correct Gluck?" Judge of the confusion! The public that does not understand these questions of art, and to whom it is matter of perfect indifference whether the instrumentation be changed or not, could not comprehend the rage of this young fanatic of the pit.' Then, in the great recitative of 'Orestes,' in the third act, there is a part for the trombones, producing an admirable effect; this was suppressed. The same voice again was heard, 'The trombones have not sounded. It's insupportable!' But he was so far successful that the next night these faults were amended. The authorities must have found the band of young enthusiasts very troublesome, and their applause was often considered as ill-timed as their censure. Thus they would frantically applaud passages no one else paid attention to, a beautiful phrase in the accompaniment, a recitation sung with truthful expression, a clever modulation. 'The public took us for *clageurs*, either aspirant or supernumerary, while the chief of the *claque*, who knew the contrary, and whose skilful combinations were terribly disarranged by our ill-timed applause, darted on us from time to time glances worthy of Neptune when he pronounced the *Quos ego*.'

But a new sensation was in store for the excitable Hector. He was present at the first representation of 'Hamlet' at the Odeon. He did not know a word of English, but that did not matter—he possessed himself the real soul of a poet, and Shakespeare, as he says, fell upon him like a thunderbolt. 'His lightning,

opening the heaven of art with a sublime crash, illumined for me the profoundest depths.' But this was not all: Miss Smithson, a fascinating Irish actress, who five years afterwards became his wife, appeared as Ophelia, and he at once fell hopelessly, madly in love. How he raves about her! To attract her attention he moved heaven and earth to organise a grand concert of his works, but when this took place the proceeds hardly covered the expenses, and he afterwards found that the fair Ophelia had not heard anything about it. The next event was a second failure to gain the first prize of the Conservatoire, although he gained the second. All this while he was incessantly writing ardent letters to Miss Smithson, which only frightened her, and she forbade her servant to receive any more. But the irrepressible lover was not discouraged. Hearing that she was to play in 'Romeo and Juliet' for the benefit of the French actor Huet, he went to the director of the Opera Comique, and prevailed upon him to allow a new overture, composed by Berlioz himself, to be played on the occasion—at least his name would figure in the same programme with Juliet's! Of this he says, 'The director and the *chef d'orchestre* consented. When I went to the theatre the English artists were just finishing the rehearsal of "Romeo and Juliet," they were at the scene of the tomb. At the moment of my entrance Romeo was distractedly carrying Juliet off in his arms. My looks involuntarily fell on the Shakespearean group. I uttered a cry, and fled, wringing my hands. Juliet

had heard and seen me. . . . I had made her afraid. Pointing me out, she asked the actors on the stage with her to take notice of this gentleman, *whose eyes boded no good.*'

Once more he tried for the Prix de Rome. This time the subject was 'Cleopatra after the Battle of Actium,' but the music was, according to the composer's account, too vigorous and dramatically true to satisfy the tame classicalists on the jury, and that year no prize at all was given. Here is a piece of conversation reported with Boieldieu, the well-known composer, who was one of the judges :—

'Mon Dieu, boy, what have you done? You have thrown the prize away when it was in your hands!'

'Still, I did my best, sir, I assure you.'

'That's just what we reproach you with. You ought not to do your best; best is the enemy of good with you. How could I approve of such things, I who above all like music that soothes me?'

'It is difficult, sir, to make music to soothe you, when a Queen of Egypt, devoured with remorse and poisoned by the bite of a serpent, is dying in moral and physical anguish!'

The next year, however, probably thinking that it was worth while to moderate his style a little to gain the 3000 francs a year for three years which constituted the prize, he succeeded better, and was this time victorious. The subject, which was the 'Last night of Sardanapalus,' was very nearly too much for him though,

and he was sorely tempted to give a tremendous scene at the end, when the palace is burnt, with the cries of the women, the defiance of the monarch, the crash of the final catastrophe. Very prudently, however, he reserved this for the public performance, and the public interest, from reports of the extraordinary effect at the rehearsal, had been greatly excited before the day came. But 'five hundred thousand maledictions on the musicians who do not count their bars! In my score a horn gave the cue to the drums, the drums to the cymbals, these to the big drum, and the first blow on the big drum led to the final explosion. My confounded horn does not give its note, the drums not hearing it are not played, as a consequence the cymbals and big drum are silent too; nothing goes off, nothing—the violins and basses continue alone their weak *tremolo*; no explosion at all! a conflagration extinct without a blaze! . . . A cry of horror escaped from my panting breast—I flung my score across the orchestra—I overturned two desks!' . . . But it was no use, the piece was ruined. But a greater work than this had been composed a short time before, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, entitled 'Episode dans la vie d'un artiste,' one of the most extraordinary productions of modern music, the earlier portions being of exquisite beauty, and the later ones weird and horrible, like a nightmare dream of terror.

Of Berlioz's journey to Rome and his life there, which does not seem very much to have contributed to

his artistic progress, I shall say little, for it would be impossible to condense into a few pages the admirably graphic description, naïve and life-like, with M. Berlioz, of course, as the centre figure (this is his reception by his fellow-students, at the Villa Medici in Rome, as told by himself :—‘*First Student*.—“Here’s Berlioz. Berlioz! oh, that head! oh, those locks! oh, that nose! Come now, Jalay, he beats you hollow in noses!” *Second Student*.—“And you, he eclipses you in hair!” “Mille dieux, what a mop!” “Hi, Berlioz, don’t you know me?” and so on’), given in his ‘*Mémoires*’ of those Roman days. And though sorely tempted, I must refrain from telling the story of a certain murderous expedition upon which, in a wild fury against some ladies in Paris who had offended him, he set out, and his purchase of two sets of feminine disguise for the purpose, with the ludicrous *descrescendo* of his rage as he travels further from Rome, until at last, on approaching Nice, he discovers *he is hungry*, and begins to reason with himself as to the impolicy of putting an abrupt termination to his existence—for the proprieties of course required that after killing the ladies he must kill himself—at the time when so many great works conceived by him were not executed, consequently he changes his mind, and tamely orders the postillions to drive back to Rome.

By the kind permission of M. Horace Vernet, the great battle-painter, who at that time was director of the French Academy in Rome, Berlioz was allowed to

return to France six months before the expiration of the two years of his exile, and, with his 'Symphonie Fantastique' remodelled, and its sequel, 'Lelio, ou Le retour à la Vie'—like most continuations, not equal to its predecessor—newly written, he hurried back, to plunge into the world of concerts again, to Paris. At this point the thread of the Ophelia romance is taken up again, a romance that there are good reasons for believing that Berlioz himself had more than occasionally forgotten during the interval. The lodgings that he took on his return were the same that she had formerly occupied during her triumphant first days in Paris, and a thrill goes through the heart of the excitable artist when he is told that she is even now in Paris, and a few days before had actually been occupying the very rooms where he is. Berlioz is about to give a concert; through a friend, tickets are sent to Miss Smithson, and she is prevailed on to be present. Describing their meeting he gives the following account of her impressions, communicated afterwards to him:—"Habeneck directed the performance. When I took my seat *pantelant* behind him, Miss Smithson, who till then had been wondering if she were deceived by the name at the head of the programme, perceived and recognised me, "'Tis indeed he, poor young man. . . . Of course he has forgotten me, I—hope." The symphony begins and produces a tremendous effect. The passionate accent of the work, its burning melodies, its cries of love, its burst of rage,

and the immense vibrations of my great orchestra heard close at hand, could not fail to produce an effect as deep as it was unexpected on her nervous organisation and her poetic imagination. Then, in the secret of her heart, she said, "Ah ! if he still loved me !" And when the actor, Soccage, who was reciting the *rôle* of Lelio (terrible fustian which was supposed to represent the feelings of the desperate Hector himself), pronounced the words, "Oh, why can I not find her, the Juliet, the Ophelia, whom my heart calls for?" etc. etc. ; "Mon Dieu—Juliet—Ophelia—I cannot doubt any more," thought Miss Smithson, "It is *me* that he thinks of ; he loves me still !" And it seemed to her that the place was in a whirl, she could not listen any more, and returned home like a somnambulist, hardly knowing where she went. The next day Berlioz called upon her. After this the course of love, if not of fortune, for a time ran smoothly, notwithstanding that both his own and the lady's relations violently opposed the idea of marriage between two such utterly impecunious individuals as they were.

Some years before, the Parisian public had raved about Miss Smithson's poetic representation of Shakespearean heroines, but now, when she had returned and taken a theatre of her own, she was fated to discover the fickleness of public taste ; she was no more a novelty, the theatre night after night was almost empty, and not only did she soon lose all the money that she had saved, but also incurred considerable debts, which



for some time to come weighed heavily upon her and Berlioz after they were married. And another grievous misfortune befell her. She had one day been arranging for a final benefit at the close of her theatrical appearances, and was getting out of the carriage at her door, when her foot slipped. She fell violently on the pavement and broke her leg. Slowly she recovered, but it was long before the lameness consequent on this accident vanished. During this time Berlioz behaved in every respect as a devoted lover should do. He takes care to let this be known, according to his wont, in his '*Mémoires*.' Of their marriage he says, 'On that day she had nothing in the world but her debts, and the fear of no more appearing to advantage on the stage because of her accident; on my side all that I had was three hundred francs which my friend Gonnet had lent me, and I had again quarrelled with my parents. . . . But she was mine, and I defied the world!' This was in 1833.

A man of extraordinary character and genius now appears for a short time, attracted within the sphere of the greater genius and equally eccentric character of Berlioz. A concert had been given at the Conservatoire by Berlioz, at which, amid tremendous applause, his '*Symphonie Fantastique*' was played. He says:— 'To crown my happiness, when the public had departed, a man, with wild, long hair, piercing eyes, strange and emaciated figure—one possessed of soaring genius, a colossus among giants whom I had never seen before,

and of whom the first sight powerfully affected me, waited alone for me in the hall, stopped as I passed to clasp my hand, overwhelmed me with ardent praise, which set my heart and head on fire ;—*it was Paganini !*

This meeting had an important influence on Berlioz's life. Soon afterwards Paganini asked him to write a solo for an alto by Stradivarius that he possessed, and out of this request arose the 'Harold in Italy' symphony, with the prominent solo part for the alto or viola. But apparently it was not quite prominent enough, for Paganini did not appear satisfied with it, and possibly had expected a *concerto* instead of a symphony with merely a leading part such as this. The composer relates that the beautiful 'March of the Pilgrims' was improvised in two hours 'au coin du feu.' Paganini was at this time (1849) suffering from an affection of the larynx, from which, indeed, he soon afterwards died. After a journey in Sardinia, he returned to Paris in time to be present at the '*chute éclatante*,' as Berlioz candidly calls it, of 'Benvenuto Cellini,' and also at a concert in the Conservatoire again, which, notwithstanding the severe bronchitis from which he was suffering, the state of Berlioz's funds made it imperative that he should give. At the latter the two symphonies, the 'Fantastique' and 'Harold,' were performed. At the close the strange-looking Italian again waited for him, this time with his son as interpreter, for he himself had now almost entirely lost his voice. He made a sign to the boy,

who, getting on a chair, put his ear close to his father's mouth and listened. Then Achille got down and said, 'My father desires me to assure you, sir, that in all his life he has never received such an impression from any concert as he has from this—that your music has quite upset him, and that he cannot resist throwing himself at your knees to thank you.' Berlioz was bewildered at this, but Paganini seized him by the arm, and just managing to say 'Oui, Oui!' dragged him into the room where many of the musicians still were, and there went down on his knees and kissed his hand. But this was not all. The next morning, while Berlioz was lying ill and dejected in bed, young Achille entered his room with a letter. 'My father will be very sorry to learn,' he said, 'that you are so ill, and if he were not suffering himself he would certainly have come to see you. Here is a letter he gave me for you.' As Berlioz was about to open it, the boy stopped him and said, 'There's no answer; my father said you must read it when you are alone,'—and thereupon went out. When the letter was opened it was found to run thus in Italian:

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—Beethoven dead, only Berlioz is able to make him live again, and I, who have tasted your divine compositions, worthy of a genius such as you—I believe it my duty to beg your kind acceptance, as homage on my part, of twenty thousand francs, which will be paid on presentation of the enclosed.—Believe me always, your affectionate

'NICOLO PAGANINI'

Berlioz's wife entered the room while he was reading this, and noticed at once how agitated he was. "Allons! what is it now? some new misfortune? But let us take courage. We have supported the others." "No, no—on the contrary." "What is it then?" "Paganini!" "Well?" "He has sent me—twenty thousand francs!" "Louis! Louis!" cried Henrietta excitedly to my son, who was playing in the next room, "come here to your mother! Come and thank the good God for what He has done for your father!" Then my wife and child, running together, fell prostrate by the side of my bed, the mother praying, the astonished boy by her side joining his little hands. Oh, Paganini! what a scene! If you had only been able to witness it! Despite all the French sentiment of this, and the egotism exhibited on almost every page of the appropriately called 'Hector Berlioz's Mémoires,' there is something to me very touching in the scene by the poor man's bedside, the cheque on Rothschilds lying on the counterpane, Harriet, his gentle wife, and the little child praying at his side. And I confess that I like to linger over it, for there are scenes to come in the life of this wayward self-willed Frenchman that do not please me at all. The result of this splendid gift, honourable to both giver and receiver, was that Berlioz was able to pay debts that had been a sore drag upon him, and almost for the first time in his life to set to work in peace and with an easy mind to write his symphony-cantata 'Roméo et Juliette.' This was com-

pleted in seven months, but, alas ! before the work was printed and could be sent to him, the great man whose gift had procured its existence had already died at Nice.

Want of space only prevents my doing more than referring to a 'Requiem' composed by Berlioz in commemoration of those who fell at the siege of Constantine, which had been a commission from the Minister of the Interior, the price being 3000 francs ; or relating the poor composer's very comical troubles in getting the said 3000 francs. And I can also do little more than mention a 'Grande Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale,' which he was commissioned by M. de Remusat to write for performances on the occasion of the transfer of the bodies of the victims of the Three Days in 1830 to the tomb beneath the monument erected in their honour in the Place de la Bastille. This was to be written for 200 wind instruments, and the price agreed on (and this time paid without demur) was 10,000 francs. The idea of the work, as given by Berlioz, is certainly a fine one. First, he depicted the fury of combat and slaughter, then the music was to be like an oration spoken over the remains of the brave men as they were being lowered into their last resting-place, and then was to come what he calls the 'apotheosis' of the slain, rising like the column of liberty, with the angel on its summit soaring on outspread wings towards heaven. Unfortunately the public performance was a *fiasco*, for the National

Guard had been kept broiling in the sun waiting for the musicians and ministers, and at last commenced their march to the accompaniment of fifty drums alone. And of 'Benvenuto Cellini,' an opera of which I have only read the score, but on the strength of this, and the hearing of excerpts from it, such as the 'Carnival Romain,' at the Crystal Palace and other concerts, I believe is (despite a libretto in one respect, the casting of the statue, almost as absurd as has ever been written, and that is saying a great deal), a magnificent work of art, the non-success of which, on its production many years ago at the Royal Italian Opera, and its non-production since, is a crying shame for the musical public of this country—I shall only add the composer's account of its first reception. It was given at the Paris Opera on September 3, 1838. 'They awarded the overture,' he says, 'an exaggerated success, and hissed all the rest with admirable *ensemble* and energy.' But Paganini was present and approved, so, as I have said, it was not all a loss.

The next incident in his life, a very painful one, shall also be recorded very briefly, and, in justice to both parties, without comment. His wife, who for some time had been in ill health, was very jealous of him, and opposed his going on long tours in other countries for the purpose of giving concerts which he had projected. At last, in 1840, Berlioz set out on one of these tours without his wife, leaving behind the beautiful Ophelia of his former ardent dreams, with whom he never afterwards

lived, though still, according to his own account, retaining a sincere affection for her ; but he did not travel alone. Who was in the right ? or, rather, who was least wrong ?—I prefer not to judge.

The incidents of this tour in Germany are told with inimitable vivacity by Berlioz, and the story of his difficulty in getting up concerts and securing proper performances of his works—nearly all written on a scale to which German orchestras were not then accustomed—his frenzied labours and furious joy when a satisfactory result was obtained, must be read in the series of letters from Germany addressed in turn to a number of eminent musicians with whom he was acquainted. Very droll is the account of a visit to the Court of one of the many princelets that then divided the land, the Duke of Hechingen. At the concert there, the ‘March of the Pilgrims’ from ‘Harold,’ the ‘Ball Scene’ from the ‘Symphonie Fantastique,’ and the ‘King Lear’ overture, were performed, and by dint of cutting out all the trumpet passages that the players were not able to execute, giving the trombone only a few easy notes, and with the assistance of the Grand Duke, who stood by the side of the drummer and helped him to count his bars, the pieces went off fairly well. At Leipzig, Mendelssohn received Berlioz with open arms, and most generously assisted him in his concerts, ungrudgingly sacrificing his own time to superintend rehearsals, correct the scores, and even translate the words of some of the choruses. This was all the more unexpected, as

Mendelssohn and Berlioz, who had seen a good deal of each other during their Roman days, had not always agreed very well, and Mendelssohn, whose appreciation of his contemporaries was not often as fervid as it might have been, does not seem to have been much enamoured of Berlioz's rather wild eccentric muse. On the other side, however, the appreciation was very cordial, and there is a glowingly laudatory account of the 'Walpurgisnacht' in the description given in the 'Mémoires' of this visit to Leipzig.

Berlioz was never so happy as when he was able to produce big effects, and Heine's words about him so cleverly hit off this characteristic, that I cannot help quoting them. 'Berlioz,' he says, 'is a colossal nightingale, a lark the size of an eagle, such as people say existed in the world before the flood. Yes, his music has, in general, the effect upon me of something primeval, if not antediluvian; it makes one dream of gigantic species of extinct animals, of mammoths, and of fabulous empires with fabulous suns; . . . the magic accents call to mind Babylon, the hanging gardens of Semiramis, the marvels of Nineveh, the proud edifices of Mizraim, such as we see in the pictures of the English masters.' It is only just both to Heine and Berlioz to say that later on, after 'L'Enfance du Christ' was produced, Heine retracted some of his sharp criticisms, but all the same there is a good deal of truth in the foregoing.

In 1844 an exhibition of products of industry had



taken place in Paris, and at the end, Berlioz, in conjunction with Straus, the dance-music conductor, undertook to give a gigantic concert with 1022 instrumentalists. Two only of Berlioz's compositions were given in the long programme, but nearly all the pieces produced, with such an immense orchestra, an overpowering effect. After the 'Benediction des Poignards' from 'Les Huguenots' had been given with terrific effect, he says, 'I was in such a state that the concert had for some time to be stopped. They brought me "punch" and some clothes. Then on the platform itself, pulling together a dozen harps with their canvas coverings, they formed in this way a little chamber, in which, by stooping a little, I was able to undress myself and change my shirt before the public without being seen.'

After a visit to his father in the south of France he soon set out again upon another more extended artistic tour in Germany, Hungary, and Bohemia, which is chiefly interesting, apart from the unfailing record of escapades and adventures which befell him everywhere, as the period during which, perhaps, his greatest work, 'La Damnation de Faust,' was commenced and nearly completed. The arrangement of the great Hungarian March, which always produces such an extraordinary effect when the work is performed, was not originally intended to be a part of it. An amateur of Vienna had suggested to him that if he wished to please the Hungarians, whom he was about to visit, he should

compose a piece on one of their national themes, and handed him a collection of these, including the celebrated 'Rakoczy March.' Berlioz himself must tell the effect of his handling of this theme, as to which he had been rather anxious beforehand, not knowing how the people of Pesth would approve of a foreigner treating so unceremoniously their most cherished air. 'After a flourish of trumpets, founded upon the rhythm of the first bars of the melody, the theme appeared, executed *piano* by the flutes and clarionets, and accompanied by a *pizzicato* of the stringed instruments. The public remained calm and silent at this unexpected opening, but when in a long *crescendo* fugitive fragments of the theme appeared, broken by the dull boom of the big drum simulating the report of distant cannon, the hall began to ferment with an indescribable sound, and at the moment when the orchestra, let loose in a furious *mêlée*, poured out its *fortissimo*, so long held back, cries and unheard-of stampings shook the hall, the concentrated fury of all these maddened souls exploded in accents which gave me a thrill of terror; I seemed to feel my hair on end, and from that fatal moment I had to bid adieu to the peroration of my piece, the tempest of the orchestra being unable to contend with the eruption of the volcano, of which nothing could now stop the violence.' But this was not all. On retiring from the orchestra the composer saw a man, miserably dressed, and with agitated countenance, approaching him, On perceiving Berlioz

the man threw himself upon him, embracing him with the wildest ardour, his eyes overflowing with tears, while he stammered out, 'Ah, Monsieur, Monsieur! moi Hongrois—pauvre diable—pas parler Français—un poco l'Italiano—Pardonnez—mon ectase! Ah! ái compris votre canon—Oui, oui—la grande bataille—Allemands chiens!' (striking repeated blows on his breast), 'Dans le cœur moi—je vous porte—Ah, Français—revolutionnaire—savoir faire la musique des revolutions.' Altogether Berlioz found he had unchained a tempest that he had not looked for.

Thinking it a pity not to utilise this piece, Berlioz incorporated it in his 'Faust' music, which he was writing at the time, making the hero in the libretto which Berlioz himself wrote pass over the plains of Hungary for the purpose. Of the rest of the work, it was written at various times—the introduction in an inn at Passau on the Danube, the lovely 'Ballet des Sylphes' and 'Scene on the Elbe' at Vienna, the refrain of the 'Ronde des Paysans' by the light of the gas in a shop window at Pesth, when he had lost himself one night in the streets. Much of the remainder was written in something of the same peripatetic fashion in Paris—at the café on the Boulevard, in his garden. The first performance of this work, which took place at the Opéra Comique in 1846, was a total failure, and entailed so much loss upon the composer that he was compelled to go to Russia, there to recoup his resources, and this he did very satis-

factorily, the first concert at Moscow yielding him no less than 8000 francs.

The next year found him in England, engaged by Jullien, the promenade concert conductor, to direct the performances of opera which were to begin at Drury Lane Theatre. Poor Jullien afterwards went mad; his mind must at this time surely have been giving way, for he had made no preparations at all for the season, and after a few performances of 'Lucia di Lammermoor' with Madame Dorus Gras and Mr. Sims Reeves in the cast (Berlioz says of the last, 'Reeves has a fine natural voice, and sings as well as the frightful English language will allow'), Jullien was completely ruined, and Berlioz received in all only a month's salary.

'L'Enfance du Christ,' a sacred trilogy, was the next work of any importance that he wrote. All who have heard this piece will remember the beautiful 'Repose of the Holy Family' in the second part. An amusing story in connection with this is given in a letter to Mr. Ella, and as it is a good specimen of Berlioz's ordinary literary style, I insert it *in extenso* :—

'MY DEAR ELLA,—You ask why the Mystery, "La Fuite en Egypte," bears this indication: "attributed to Pierre Ducré, imaginary chapel-master." It is in consequence of a fault I committed—a grave fault, for which I have been severely punished, and concerning which I always reproach myself. Here are the facts ·

I found myself one evening at the house of Baron de M., an intelligent and sincere friend of art, with one of my fellow-students of the Academy of Rome, the learned architect Duc. Everybody played at écarté, whist, or brelan, save myself. . . . I was bored in a manner sufficiently evident, when Duc said, turning to me, "Since thou dost nothing, why not write a piece of music for my album?" "Willingly." I took a piece of paper, and traced some lines, upon which soon appeared an andantino in four parts *for the organ*. Recognising in it a certain character of naïve mysticism, the idea struck me to apply words of the same kind. The organ piece disappeared and became the chorus in which the shepherds at Bethlehem take farewell of the infant Jesus, at the moment when the Holy Family set out for Egypt. Whist and brelan were interrupted to hear my holy effusion, and the company were as much amused by the antique turn of the verse as of the music. "Now," said I to Duc, "I shall put thy name at the bottom. I mean to compromise thee." "What an idea! My friends very well know that I am entirely ignorant of composition." "Ah! that is a good reason, truly, for not composing; but, since thy vanity refuses to adopt my piece, I will create a name of which thine shall make part. It shall be Pierre Ducre, whom I institute music-master at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris in the seventeenth century. That will give to my manuscript all the value of an archæological curiosity." . . . Some days after I wrote at home the piece called

"Repose of the Holy Family," beginning this time with the words, and a small overture for a small orchestra in a small, innocent style, in F sharp minor without the *note sensible*. . . . A month later, when I thought no more about my retrospective score, a chorus was wanted for the programme of a concert I had to conduct, and it amused me to insert that of the shepherds from my Mystery, leaving under it the name of Pierre Ducré, music-master at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris (1679). The choristers at rehearsals conceived a lively affection for this ancestral music. "Where did you disinter it?" they said to me. "Disinter is nearly the word," I answered without hesitation; "it was found in an old walled-up chest during the recent restoration of the Sainte-Chapelle." The concert took place; Pierre Ducré's piece was well rendered and still better received, while the critics praised it the next day and congratulated me on my discovery. Only one expressed doubts concerning its authenticity and age. . . . On the following Sunday, Duc was at the house of a young and beautiful lady who greatly loved ancient music, and professed much contempt for modern productions of known date. "Well, Madame, how did you find our last concert?" "Oh! very mixed, as usual." "And the piece of Pierre Ducré?" "Perfect! delicious! there is music!—time has removed none of its freshness. It has true melody, of which contemporary composers force us to remark the rarity. It is not your M. Berlioz, in any case, who could even produce

its equal." At these words Duc was compelled to laugh, and had the imprudence to answer, "Alas! Madame, it was my M. Berlioz, nevertheless, who composed the *Shepherds' Adieu*, and who did it in my presence one evening on the corner of a card-table." The lady bit her lips, the blush of confusion tinged her face, and turning her back on Duc, she threw out with temper the cruel phrase, "M. Berlioz is an impertinent." Judge of my shame, my dear Ella, when Duc repeated these words to me. I hastened to make atonement by humbly publishing in my own name that poor little work, retaining, however, under the title the words, "Attributed to Pierre Ducré, imaginary chapel-master," to recall this my culpable freak.'

Notwithstanding that his conduct as a husband had not been immaculate, there is no doubt that Berlioz was fondly attached to his wife, and after the erratic fashion of the man had really loved her. But he could not love without excitement and action, and she, the poor superseded Juliet, suffered during nearly the whole of her married life, and for the last four years lived alone at Montmartre, paralysed and deprived of the power of speech and movement, her son absent at sea, her husband frequently visiting her when in Paris, but often away roaming from one capital of Europe to another. She breathed her last on 3rd March 1854. Berlioz was profoundly affected by this loss, and in his grief, theatrical as much of the expression of it is, there is yet a note of deep and true feeling to be found.

He says, 'In the midst of regrets for this perished love I felt ready to sink into immense, terrible, immemorable infinite pity with which the remembrance of the sorrows of my poor Henrietta overwhelmed me.' On the day of the funeral he writes, 'To-day while she is borne almost alone towards the cemetery, Paris, ingrate and forgetful, rumbles below there in its smoke; he who loved her, and has not the courage to follow her to the tomb, weeps in the corner of a deserted garden, and her young son, buffeted by the tempest, is rocked on the top of a ship's tall mast far away on the gloomy ocean.' It is too true of many artists, as Carlyle's mother once said of her son, they are 'gey ill to live wi',' and the poor, lonely woman, whose life, once so brilliant, had come to so sad an end, might have been happier with some one of commoner temperament and humbler ambition, whose love had less of artistic emotion about it. Very characteristic is the comment made on the death of poor Harriet Smithson by Liszt in a letter of condolence written from Weimar to Berlioz, and quoted very complacently by the latter: 'She inspired thee, thou hast loved her, thou hast sung of her—her task was accomplished!' And this, forsooth, is all that a woman's life is worth—to make a pretty little piece of macadam for the great artist's footsteps to pass over, and then her task is accomplished!

Berlioz never made much money by his musical productions, but he had fortunately two small but still assured sources of income, the post of librarian to



the Conservatoire of Music (his applications to be appointed a Professor there were persistently refused) and that of writer of the musical *feuilleton* in the *Journal des Débats*, a labour continued by him, much as he detested it, for about thirty years. As he grew older, life assumed a sadder aspect to him ; his humour became more savage and gloomy, though still there was much of the extravagant old Berlioz about him—as witness his ridiculous persecution of poor Madame F—, a white-haired old grandmamma, whom yet, on the strength of her having been the ‘ Estelle ’ of his early days, he followed from place to place, persuading himself and trying to persuade her that he was again passionately in love with and wanted to marry her. Fortunately she had the good sense to treat this as a sort of amiable mania on his part (and no woman, however old, is quite displeased at being told she is adorable !). One of her letters, which with his usual candour he quotes, is so prettily phrased, that I must quote a passage from it :— ‘ Believe me, I am not without pity for unreasonable children. I have always found that to restore them to calm and reason, the best thing is to distract their attention and give them pictures. I take the liberty to send you one which will recall to you the reality of the present, and will destroy the illusions of the past.’ ‘ She sent me her *portrait*. Excellent, adorable lady ! ’ adds Berlioz. And of the gloomy humours that now afflicted him, a specimen may be given from a letter to Madame Ernst :— ‘ I am passing one of those days

when I wish that the world were a bomb full of powder, to which I might put a light for amusement.'

Something of the bitterness of these later days was due to the reception given to his works. He had always been a great admirer of Virgil's 'Æneid,' and he was prevailed upon by the Princess Wittgenstein to undertake a great work on a subject of which he had often dreamed, 'Les Troyens,' an opera in five acts. Three years and a half he devoted to this, writing the libretto and composing the music to it. The second part, 'Les Troyens à Carthage,' was produced by M. Carvalho at the Opera Comique, with but mediocre success. The first performance took place on 4th November 1863; but the composer, cruelly hurt by the many 'cuts' which it was considered necessary to make, had little satisfaction from it, and the chief advantage gained by him was that the sum of money received for the twenty-one representations that were given enabled him to resign his wearisome labours on the *Journal des Débats*. The remainder of this work has never yet been performed. An opera in two acts, 'Beatrice and Benedict,' written for M. Benazet of the Baden-Baden Theatre, and containing some beautiful music, of which a duet, 'Vous soupirez, Madame,' is frequently given in concert-rooms, was more successful; but, a broken-down old man, suffering terribly from neuralgia, little was now left to him of the ardent hopes and fierce delights of early days. Almost the closing words of his 'Mémoires' are: 'I am in my sixty-first

year. I have no longer hopes, illusions, or vast conceptions. My son is almost always far away from me. I am alone. My contempt for the imbecility and dishonesty of men, my hatred of their horrible ferocity, are grown to a head; and from hour to hour I say to death, "When you will!" And why does it linger?'

His nervous tortures increased, and though he paid visits to Vienna and St. Petersburg to conduct his works there, and occasionally found pleasure in the attentions and applause with which he was received, his desponding and constant sufferings more and more weighed on him, and his death on 8th March 1869, was a happy release to the poor wayward spirit that so long had fumed and fretted upon the earthly stage.





